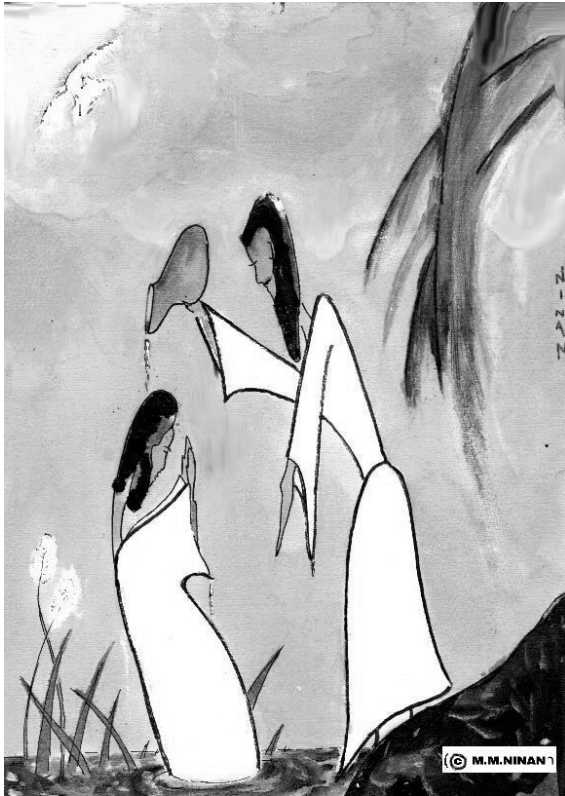


A STUDY ON

BAPTISM



M.M.Ninan

A STUDY ON BAPTISM

M. M. NINAN

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Dedicated to

OUR CHILDREN
Premu, Anil, Preethy & Ajit
and
THEIR HOUSEHOLD
(Ronnie, Priyanka, Tarun -
Anna, Mary-Katherine
- Charley -
Jenny, Mirium.)
and
THE GENERATIONS TO COME.

What we have received from our
fathers, this also we commit to
you,
That you may charge your
children and their household
after them to keep the WAY

DAD & MUM
Dr. & Mrs. Ninan



NINAN Feb.,2000

A Study on Baptism

Prof. M.M.Ninan

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AND REDISCOVERY OF THE GREAT COMMISSION

THE DIOCESE OF NORTH AMERICA & EUROPE

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Forward

Baptism is one of the dominical sacraments and hence has been taken seriously by all Christian denominations. However greatest debates and controversies have risen in Christian circles based on the sacrament of baptism leading to the formation of new sects within the Christian churches. The reason for this is, lack of understanding about the true meaning of baptism.

I read the book “A Study On Baptism” by Prof. M.M.Ninan. The author has done justice by going into the core of the topic and addressing it from a biblical, historical, cultural, scriptural and symbolic aspect. Prof.M.M.Ninan is a well-read person who is able to articulate a subject in a good way. His great reading habits are very much evident in this book, as he has dealt with this topic on a wider angle.

It is very important that everyone must study this topic and acquire the knowledge of the faith and teachings of the church.

I congratulate Prof.M.M.Ninan for his efforts in publishing this book and I pray that it may be a source of blessing to many.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Euyakim Mar Coorilos". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined.

Euyakim Mar Coorilos Episcopa
Diocese of North America and Europe.



A Must Read on the Subject of Baptism

Sample page from *Study on Baptism* by Prof. M.M. Ninan of San Jose, California. His painting © serves as cover art on this helpful book.

Titus 3:5 “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”

"The washing of rebirth can only be that washing of the blood of Christ that cleanses us. It is not the symbol that saves, but the reality. The reality is the blood of Christ. If baptism were necessary for salvation, we would expect to find it stressed whenever the gospel is presented in Scripture. Though Peter mentions baptism in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38), in his sermon from Solomon's portico in the Temple (Acts 3:12-26), Peter makes no mention to baptism. He links forgiveness of sin to repentance (3:19). If baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sin, why didn't Peter say so in Acts 3?

"Paul never made baptism as a part of his gospel presentation. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul gives a summary of the gospel message he preached. There is no mention of baptism. In I Corinthians 1:17, Paul states that "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel," thus clearly differentiating the gospel from baptism. That is difficult to understand if baptism is necessary for salvation. If baptism were part of the gospel itself, necessary for salvation, what good would it have done Paul to preach the gospel, but not baptize? No one would have been saved. Paul clearly understood baptism to be separate from the gospel, and hence in no way efficacious for salvation. In Galatians 5:1-12 Paul rejects the argument that circumcision is necessary for salvation. But Paul makes no alternate claim that baptism is required in place of circumcision, but emphasizes that we are saved by faith through Jesus Christ alone.

"The purpose for writing the book of John was that we 'might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.' Therefore, if we want to know about salvation, we need to look into this book. But there is no reference to water baptism at all in this book. The only reference to it is in the conversation to Nicodemus well ahead of any institution of baptism and could not have been referring to that at all. To add force to the

importance of John's Gospel regarding this controversy about water baptism, it should be mentioned that it was written in about 90 AD. This means it was written well after the final Pentecost. But John never mentioned baptism in connection with salvation.

(and it continues...)

I found this book totally involving and interesting. Proudly—if ever Christians are allowed to use this word—I found that my views were in 100% alignment with Prof. Ninan's writing on this controversial subject in Christianity. Rare indeed is such a unity of thought! I could not but praise God for it and now present it, too, for your consideration. Be brought up to date and gain a thorough knowledge of this subject by having the entire book of your own to read through.



Professor Madathilparampil Mammen Ninan hails from a Mar Thoma Syrian Christian family which traces its origin from the time of Saint Thomas.

Shown here is Ponnamma, a sociologist and Professor M.M. Ninan's wife. Prof. M.M.Ninan is a Professor of Theoretical Physics and has taught around the world in various schools including, Ethiopia, Ghana, Jamaica, Sudan, Yemen, India and the USA. He was a *tentmaker (a la Paul/Saul of Tarsus)*, investing his time in church planting while working in these various Universities. In Yemen, Prof. Ninan started the International Christian Fellowship of which he was the first Moderator (Chairman). This was the first Church after the (about) 1350 years of the destruction of the Thomas churches of Yemen in 600 AD under the Islamic thrust. The Indian Fellowships of



Yemen started from his home. He was also closely linked with the Red Sea Mission, Missionaries of Charities (Mother Teresa), Sudan Interior Mission, Summer Institute of Linguistics, and the Swedish Free Mission. In the Sudan Prof. Ninan was one of the founding Pastors of the Sudan Pentecostal Churches and taught in the Sudan Theological College. Most of his biblical studies (to be found listed on <http://www.mmmninan.com>)

were done during these Pastoral periods. He retired as the Principal (President) of the Hindustan Academy of Engineering and Applied Sciences, affiliated to the University of Bangalore, India.

His eldest brother Dr. M. M. Thomas is a world-famous Theologian of the Princeton Theological Seminary and was the Chairman of the World Council of Churches (WCC, Geneva); President of the Christian Institute for Study of Society and Religion (CISRS) in Bangalore, India; and the Governor of Nagaland in India.

Clifton Moberg

Editor

The
HOLY BIBLE

The Berkeley Version
IN MODERN ENGLISH



CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The question of Baptism had been a constant source of fighting within the Christian groups. This is a very sensitive subject and therefore we need to study this with absolute objectivity taking into consideration the historical, cultural, scriptural, and symbolic aspects. There are varying points of views based on how one look at the scripture, its hermeneutics, authority, meaning, significance, etc. This study is my own journey into the problem of baptism. I have read through many books and articles that I have lost count of and lost original references. It included varying viewpoints. I myself have been actively involved as a spiritual and administrative head of different churches in different countries in the world or was closely associated and worked with the groups holding varying views from the Pentecostal Churches to Catholic Church.

What is expressed here is the result of the search looking for these basic questions:

What is baptism?

Is baptism a condition for salvation? Is baptism necessary for salvation?

Is baptism sufficient for salvation?

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What is the function and purpose of baptism in the context of salvation?

Is there a prescribed scriptural form of baptism? If so what is the scriptural form of baptism?

Is the baptism to be adult believer's baptism or can it be infant baptism?

In believer's baptism should there be a lower age limit? Is there a scriptural age of accountability? If so what is that age?

In the mission field do I baptize only the head of the family who profess faith or all household? What does the scripture teach?

If they indeed affect my final destiny they are very important and I should seek for an answer through the scripture and through the history. I have tried to remove all emotional factors and concentrate on the core realities.

To understand what baptism really means we first look at the word baptism or its Greek and Hebrew original word itself. What does it mean?

What is the meaning of the original Greek word?

βαπτίζω

The word *Baptism* is derived from the Greek word *baptismos*. The verb in Greek is baptizo. Its meaning commonly is given as "to dip or to immerse". I have seen people arguing over the proper mode of baptism based on this meaning.

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However, this is not the primary meaning of the word in Greek. It is only a secondary derived meaning.

The word came into existence from the smithy of Greece. The primary



meaning of the word implies a sudden change, which I believe, is the correct implication of the word. It is explained as what happens when a hot iron is dipped in cold water. The state of the material is changed drastically and permanently cast. Those who are familiar with the old style smithy will understand this well. When a piece of iron is to be remolded into a tool such as

axe, knife etc, it is first heated to near melting point and then put on the anvil and is shaped while the iron is red hot.

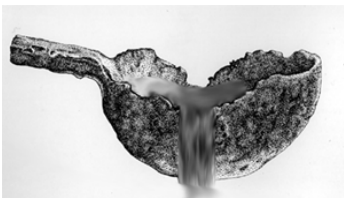
(We got the expression, "strike while it is hot" from this method of recasting) In that condition, it is often sprinkled with cold water to bring the temperature down to a level where the formation of crystals are aligned or dipped in cold water where the molten metal form bonded crystals. When the smith is satisfied with the shape and sharpness of the tool it is once again heated to full glowing red heat, plunged into cold water (or oil), and brought to normal temperature in a short time. This process is called quenching in English. It will then keep the shape and temper for a long time. It can withstand the outside rough world sharply.

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“Water is one of the most efficient quenching media where maximum hardness is required, but it is liable to cause distortion and cracking of the article. Where hardness can be sacrificed, whale, cottonseed and mineral oils are used. These tend to oxidize and form sludge with consequent lowering of efficiency... Fully hardened and tempered steels develop the best combination of strength and notch-ductility.”

www.Key-to-Steel.com

The word itself does not imply "immersion in water" as wrongly asserted by many Christian Groups who have vested interest in baptism by immersion. Quenching is effected by spraying, sprinkling, or even breathing on it and by immersing partially or fully as required. Either they are ignorant of the other meanings or deliberately hide the other meanings to prove their point.



The word is also used in cases where a cup is dipped in to get wine. More literally, it means to put a vessel into a liquid in order to lift some out.

Another meaning of the word is "to dye" where the cloth or thread is given a new color. The processes of dyeing usually involves dipping the material or thread in a dye. There are many other methods of dyeing and the word does not specify any particular mode.

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“After the wool has been spun, it is dyed according to the colors required in the designs. This important part of the rug-making process is, in itself, a highly developed craft....Natural herbal plants included indigo, mulberry, saffron, turmeric, rhubarb root, walnuts, camellia tea, and many more. After preparing dyed yarns, the weaving process can begin”

[www.octansrugs.com/ Weaving.htm](http://www.octansrugs.com/Weaving.htm)

But the basic idea is "to change totally". This meaning is borne out by Jesus as he refers to baptism in the following passages.

Mark 10:38-39 "You don't know what you are asking," Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?" "We can," they answered. Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with,"

Evidently, Jesus was not referring to his baptism in Jordan by John the Baptist. There were several disciples who had that baptism before Jesus. There is no question that Jesus was referring to the torture, suffering and death he was going to go through. Jesus was simply telling his disciples that there was going to be a sudden change from their current comfort and popularity into a drastically new situation. The essential meaning of baptism therefore is the same as being born again into a new creature. It does not imply the mode of this creation or the method.



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We should remember that the command to baptize was given to Jewish disciples. How did they understand this command?

To get some idea of the meaning of Baptism we should know what were the different types of baptisms that were used in or known to the Jewish culture. Some are directly referred to in the scripture and there are others that are not really mentioned in the Bible but were clearly in existence at that time. Jewish nation was under the Roman domination and the interaction with gentile religions also brought in meanings that are often not recognized by us.

Baptizo sometimes means bathing the whole body - as when Naaman, at Elisha's direction, "went down and dipped (*tabal*) himself seven times in the Jordan" (2 Kgs. 5:14). The Hebrew word for immersion is *tevilah* and means literally immersing in a ritual bath known as a *mikvah*

Sometimes it means washing up, as in Luke 11:38 where Jesus went to dine with a Pharisee and "The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash [the Greek word for "washed" is baptizo] before dinner." No one in ancient Israel practiced immersion before dinner, but the Pharisees "do not eat unless they wash their hands" (Mark 7:3). In fact some early manuscripts of Mark 7:4 state that the Jews baptized (*bapto*) couches. We can be sure that Jews never immersed couches; they were only ritually sprinkled.

These are ritual purification methods that are still practiced by the Kerala Brahmins called Nampoothirees. (St. Thomas Christians of Malankara

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claim their descend from this group) Though no real research had been done into these similarities they are astonishingly similar.

In essence, the word does not define a definite mode. Its meaning is spread over several possible modes and practices. But they have all two things in common.

1. It was a ritual ceremony
2. It was indicative of purification in all cases and sudden change – a rebirth – in many cases

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**BAPTIZO: TO CHANGE SUDDENLY, TO DYE, TO DIP, TO WET,
TO IMMERSE**

Here are the Greek Lexicon meaning FROM **Strong's Lexicon**

907 baptizo {bap-tid'-zo}

from a derivative of 911; TDNT - 1:529,92; verb

AV - baptize (76), wash 2, baptist 1, baptized + 2258 1; 80

- 1) to dip repeatedly, to immerse, to submerge (of vessels sunk)
- 2) to cleanse by dipping or submerging, to wash, to make clean with water, to wash one's self, bathe 3)
- 3) to overwhelm

++++ Not to be confused with 911, bapto. The clearest example that shows the meaning of baptizo is a text from the Greek poet and physician Nicander, who lived about 200 B.C. It is a recipe for making pickles and is helpful because it uses both words. Nicander says that in order to make a pickle, the vegetable

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should first be 'dipped' (bapto) into boiling water and then 'baptised' (baptizo) in the vinegar solution. Both verbs concern the immersing of vegetables in a solution. But the first is temporary. The second, the act of baptising the vegetable, produces a permanent change. When used in the New Testament, this word more often refers to our union and identification with Christ than to our water baptism. e.g. Mark 16:16. 'He that believes and is baptised shall be saved'. Christ is saying that mere intellectual assent is not enough. There must be a union with him, a real change, like the vegetable to the pickle! Bible Study Magazine, James Montgomery Boice, May 1989.

908 baptisma {bap'-tis-mah}
from 907; TDNT - 1:545,92; n n
AV - baptism 22; 22

immersion, submersion

1a) of calamities and afflictions with which one is quite overwhelmed

1b) of John's baptism, that purification rite by which men on confessing their sins were bound to spiritual reformation, obtained the pardon of their past sins and became qualified for the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom soon to be set up. This was valid Christian baptism, as this was the only baptism the apostles received and it is not recorded anywhere that they were ever rebaptised after Pentecost.

1c) of Christian baptism; a rite of immersion in water as commanded by Christ, by which one after confessing his sins and professing his faith in Christ, having been born again by the Holy Spirit unto a new life, identifies publicly with the fellowship of Christ and the church.

In Rom. 6:3 Paul states we are "baptised unto death" meaning that we are not only dead to our former ways, but they are buried. To return to them is as unthinkable for a Christian as for one to dig up a dead corpse! In Moslem countries a new believer has little trouble with Moslems until he is publicly baptised. It is then, that the Moslems' know he means business, and then the persecution starts. See also discussion of baptism under No. 907.

909 baptismos {bap-tis-mos'}
from 907; TDNT - 1:545,92; n m
AV - washing 3, baptism 1; 4

a washing, purification effected by means of water

1a) of washing prescribed by the Mosaic law (Heb 9:10) which seems to mean an exposition of the difference between the washings prescribed by the Mosaic law and Christian baptism

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The writings of Flavius Josephus could illustrate the wide latitude of the meaning of the word '*baptizo*'. He uses *baptizo* referring to the wrecking of a ship, which would mean totally capsized and immersed. However, he also uses the same word to describe other meanings. He describes a person drunk to the point of insensibility as having been "baptized" (AJ, 10.169). A group of young men who were totally involved with the intrigues of Salome are also described as "baptized" (BJ 1.535). When Jerusalem was under siege by the Romans he says that Jerusalem was "baptized" (BJ 4.137). In another instances a plunging of the sword into the stomach of a man to the hilt was described as baptizing the sword. (BJ 2.18.4).

In the *Antiquitates Judaicae* (IV.81) the ritual cleansing process was called '*hussopon baptisantes*': "*they put a little of the ashes into spring water, with hyssop, and, dipping ('hussopon baptisantes') part of these ashes in it, they sprinkled them with it*" (cf. Num. 19:18 [LXX]: '*kai lempsetai hyssopon kai bapsei eis to hydor*'). So the normal usage of the word *Baptizo* did not simply mean immersion but had wide latitude of meanings. In the ritual process of purification by baptism it simply meant sprinkling.

CHAPTER TWO

DOCTRINES OF BAPTISMS

Heb. 6:1-2 "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God," (2) "Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

The elementary teachings of Christ were assumed to be known to the Hebrews. These are found directly in the Torah both written and oral. The verse mentions six of these, which refers to Christ as symbolism. Among them is the doctrine of baptisms (plural). These were considered elementary because these were supposed to be known to every Hebrew. Essentially the law consists of both the written laws (The Five books of Moses) and the oral traditions handed down through generations. As the dispersion continued the oral traditions changed to some extent because of varying cultural circumstances. Around third century these oral traditions were written down by Rabbi Yehuda which is known as Mishna. Talmud is an expansion of the Mishna giving details of these rituals.

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We find details of the doctrine of baptisms in these traditions that will give us an insight into many of the problems associated with baptism. Some of these are incorporated in the following. They are intricately joined together.

1

CEREMONIAL PURIFICATIONS OF THE JEWS

The ceremonial purification was common in Jewish traditions. This is done not only to persons but also to clothes, utensils and furniture. If a man was to be purified or set apart, he was given a wash. Thus we read:

Lev. 8:6 Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water.

The congregation who were to be set apart, were to be washed - not only their bodies were to be washed but also their clothes. We see this in the first congregational meeting at mount Sinai.

Exod. 19:10-14 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ... After Moses had gone down the mountain to the people, he consecrated them, and they washed their clothes.

The Jews were to be Brahmins, God's priests. They were to wash themselves whenever they came in from outside. Ceremonial washing was common among the Jews as we still have it in India among the Namboodirees.

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Mark 7:3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

Hebr. 9:10 They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings --external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

There are many similarities between the Brahmins and the Jews in their customs of purity and sanctification. This will be a good comparative study. What are some of the purification that we find similar?

Here are some similarities:

Washing in water (Kuli or Snanam), Sprinkling with water (Jala thalikkal), Anointing with oil (Thailam Poosal), Pouring oil over the head (Thailabhishekam), Sprinkling blood (Raktham thalikkal), Covering with incense (dhoopam veesal), Anointing with Perfume (Sugandham Poosal- Muron poosal), We still keep Saith (Thailam, Oil) and Muron (Perfume) as part of the Christian Baptism.

Levitical Baptisms

A detailed description of Hebrew traditions given in Mishna and Talmud viewed from the point of view of Messianic Jews please see: A Walk of Purity (A Study of baptisms) by Peggy Pryor, Ledaber Ministries: Fayetteville, Tennessee 615-433-8281

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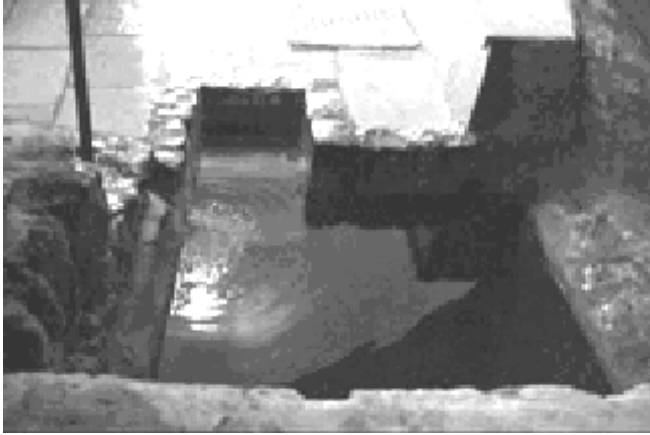
"It was customary for the sages (those who recorded the scriptures) to immerse each day before beginning work. If during the day they had a bad thought or began to perspire they had to go and immerse. The understanding being that they must be pure to work in the scriptures. Before the young boys would begin to study the scriptures each day they would go through an immersion. Before presenting a sacrifice in the Holy Temple the person would go through the *Mikvah*. Even today many people immerse before *Yom Kippur*/Day of Atonement, *Rosh haShanah*/Feast of Trumpets and the Sabbath. Immersion in the *mikvah* is an act of self-renewal and re-birth and therefore, it is customary to immerse as a sign of repentance. When a person had been through an area of sin it was customary for him to go through the *mikvah*. If a person had been very sick he would go through the *mikvah*. Some upon rising in the morning would go through the mikvah before studying Torah. One passing under an Asherah tree becomes impure and must go through an immersion. An Asherah tree is described in Jeremiah 10"

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MIKVEH -Ritual bath. According to Jewish law, individuals as well as various objects must be immersed and ritually cleansed on certain occasions. The water in the mikveh should come from a natural spring or river. Such immersion renders a person ritually clean who has had contact with the dead or a defiled object, or who has become impure through an unclean flow from the body (it is, for example, practiced by women after menstruation). In addition, ritual bathing is undertaken by pious individuals to add to their spirituality; it is also prescribed for CONVERTS. Ritual cleansing is used for vessels as well. (See also IMMERSION.) *A Concise Encyclopedia of Judaism- Dan Cohn-Sherbok. Oneworld Publications*

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A traditional mikvah of the Hebrew Home

Notice that the structure and purpose of Mikvah is same as the
Namboothiri Kulam.

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LAVER - A basin in which the priests washed their hands for purification purposes while officiating at the altar of the Tabernacle or the Temple. Moses was commanded to make a laver, or basin, so Aaron and the Levitical priests could wash their hands and feet before offering sacrifices (Ex. 30:18–21). The laver and its base were made from the bronze mirrors of the serving women (Ex. 38:8). It stood between the Tent of Meeting and the altar.

Hiram made ten bronze lavers for Solomon's Temple (1 Kin. 7:27–39). Each laver rested on a bronze cart, and each cart rested on two pairs of wheels. The panels on the carts were decorated with lions, oxen, and cherubim. The lavers were divided into two groups of five and were used for washing sacrifices. The priests, however, washed in the Bronze Sea (2 Chr. 4:6). Later in Judah's history, King Ahaz cut the panels off the carts and removed the lavers (2 Kin. 16:17).

The ten lavers are not mentioned in the prophet Ezekiel's description of the new temple. The rebuilt temples under Zerubbabel and Herod each had a single laver. [Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary, Logos Library System, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.]

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The Greek word (loutron) occurs twice in the New Testament. In Eph 5:26, Paul says that Christ gave Himself for the church "that he might sanctify it having cleansed it by the washing (Greek "laver") of water with the word"; and in Tit 3:5 he says that we are saved "through the washing (Greek "laver") of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit."

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BRONZE SEA — a huge basin made of cast bronze near the entrance of the Temple and in front of the altar (1 Kin. 7:23–26). The bronze sea, about 4 1/2 meters (15 feet) in diameter, was cast by Hiram, a bronze worker employed by Solomon (1 Kin. 7:13–14). The bronze sea was supported by 12 oxen—or bulls—consisting of three animals pointing toward each of the four points of the compass. According to 2 Chronicles 4:6, the purpose of the sea was "for the priests to wash in." The Babylonians broke the bronze sea and carried the pieces to Babylon (2 Kin. 25:13). [*Nelson's illustrated Bible dictionary, Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1995.]

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Brahminic Baptisms

For a corresponding description of Nampoothree Brahmin rituals see
<http://www.namboothiri.com/articles/nityakarmangal.htm>

1. Uthhanavidhi (Getting up in the morning): Wake up at Brahma muhoortham at five in the morning two `nazhikas' (48minutes) before sunrise. Turn to the right side, say "Kesawaaya namah" before sitting up, and turning to the east say a prayer to any one of the gods (mangala praarthana). Seek the blessings of Bhoomidevi, the goddess of earth, by first touching the floor with the right hand and then touching the head, before actually getting up from the bed.



2. Aachamanam: This is the prescribed and symbolic way of cleansing various parts of the face, head, chest and feet. Two such "Aachamanams" make one "Kaal Kazhukal", or "Paadaprakshaalanam". Note that the immediate translation of "Kaalkazhukal" is "Washing the feet", but it is not just meant foot-cleaning. Aachamanam is performed after bathing and during other important occasions in a day.

3. Snaanavidhi (Bathing): After Souchavidhi, bathing is done as follows. Step into the water halfway (abdomen level), pray to the sacred rivers (Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswathi, Narmada, Sindhu and Cauvery), look north or east and dip the whole body under water once, rub the entire body clean with the palms and dip again twice. Stand upright at the same spot and do Aachamanam twice.

4. Thalichukuli (Sprinkle-bath): After Aachamanam, take water in the right hand, chant "Aapohishta..." manthra (three stanzas from Rigveda) and sprinkle on the head, repeating this for each of the three stanzas. Say "Gange mam puneehi" thrice and immerse fully in water once more. Stricter procedure requires the Aachamanam and Thalichukuli on the banks of the pond.

Thereafter, wring the towel, wipe the body dry meanwhile chanting various manthras. Tie (or twist) the tuft of hair (if it exists), do 'Kaalkazhukal' and give "Arghiam".

5. Arghiaavidhi: Sit with knees up, do 'kaal kazhukal' twice and 'Aachamanam'. Chant "Aapohishta..." and spray water on the face, repeating after each of the three stanzas. Take water with both palms joined, stand up, chant Gayathri manthra (Om Bhoorbhuva swa:, Tatsavithur varenyam, Bhargo devasya dheh

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mahi, dhiyo yo na: prachodayat) and throw the water up and away, do this thrice - this is called 'Arghiam' offer. Take water in the right hand, pour it on the left palm, turn around to the right once, sit down and do "Tharpanam".

'Tharpanam' consists of offering water from the palm thrice each of 'deva', 'devaganam', 'rshi', 'rshiganam', 'pitrū' and 'pitruganam', holding the yagnasoothram (poonool, sacred cross-thread) first in the normal position, then straight around the neck only and then around the left arm.

This is called 'Kuli-upasthanam' and is to be done after every bath. Thereafter put the poonool in the normal position, wring the towel, do 'Kaalkazhukal' and 'Aachamanam', hang the towel on the left forearm and perform 'Sandhyaavandanam'.

If we notice the ceremonial washing of Brahmins in the river, they follow a very similar procedure as part of ritual ablution, but it involves a self immersion.

"The correct way to purify is as follows:

srastAram sarvalokAnam smrtvA nArAyanam param
yatasvAso nimajjyApsu pranaven
otthitastatah si~ncayetpurusas
Uktena svadeshatham harim smaran

One must immerse in the water holding his breath, remembering the Lord, Supreme Creator of the universe and come up chanting the pranava and contemplate the Lord , sprinkling the water all over our body chanting the purusasUkta

=====

Zoroastrian Nahn

It appears that the concept of Baptism is fundamentally a Hittite - Indo Aryan concept. The most powerful religion of the period of Jesus in the area of Iran, Iraq, and Syria at that time was Zoroastrianism. Zoroastrians still live in that

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area. But the tradition still lives in Parsees of India. A detailed description of the Parsee Nahn (from Snan - Bath) ritual is given by J.J.Modi in his book. This can be read in complete form at <http://www.avesta.org/nahn.htm>

Parsies goes through this form of sacred bath before (1) The Navjote or the Investiture with the sacred Shirt and Thread, (2) the Marriage, (3) woman at the end of their period of accouchement, and on (4) the Frawardigan holidays (optional).

Jewish Priestly Washings

“Each day, before the *Kohanim*(Priest) could enter the *Azarah* (Outer Room of the Temple), they were required to immerse themselves in a *Mikveh* (Ritual bath). Then they did *Kiddush Yadayim V'Raglayim*. This involved the washing of the hands and feet with water from the *Kiyor*. The *Kiyor* was a copper vessel with ten spouts. Standing next to the spouts, the *Kohain* would place his hands on his feet and while the water was flowing, he would gently rub his feet with his hands. Optionally, the *Kohain* could use a vessel containing water from the *Kiyor*. This was the method used by the *Kohain Gadol* on *Yom Kippur*.”

These Jewish ritual details (with the figure above) can be read from the following site.

<http://www.sci.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~mtwersky/>

2 Proselytizing Baptism CONVERSION

When a non-Jew became a Jew baptism in a river was practiced as an initiation ceremony. This must have started after the conquest of Canaan,

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because in Jacob's story only circumcision was considered necessary to incorporate another tribe into Jewish tribe. (The Reform and Reconstructionist movements of modern Judaism generally do not require a circumcision as part of the conversion process. But they insist on immersion) These were oral traditions handed down through generations and there are varying traditions in practice. These traditions were written down between the third and the fifth centuries, which forms the Talmud.

Babylonian Talmud describes the baptism procedure as follows:

Gerim 1.1-5 (<http://religion.rutgers.edu/iho/supplements>)

He who wants to be a proselyte is not received right away.
They say to him:

--"Why do you want to be a **proselyte**? Have you not seen that this people is poorer and more oppressed and humiliated than all peoples? Troubles and trials come upon them, and they bury their sons and their sons' sons. They are killed on account of **circumcision** and **immersion** and all the rest of the commandments. And they do not behave in public like all the rest of the nations."

If he says, "I am not up to this!," they dismiss him and he goes his own way.

If he takes this on himself, they lead him down to the place of **immersion** (*beth tebilah*). They cover him with water around the place of his nakedness, and they tell him some of the details of the commandments...

And they say good and comforting words to him:

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--"Happy are you! Who have you joined? Him who spoke and the world was! The world was created only for the sake of **Israel**. Only Israel is called "**sons of God**" (cf. Deut 14:1), and there is none beloved before God except Israel. All the words that we spoke to you we told you only to increase your reward!"

--- Babylonian Talmud

Orthodox and Conservative rabbis require both male and female conversion candidates to immerse themselves in a ritual bath called a mikveh. This ceremony is called tevilah. Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis do not require the use of a mikveh, but some highly recommend it. The mikveh can be any body of natural water, though the term usually refers to a specific pool that is built for the purposes of ritual purification. The equipment used varies according to the mikveh. The immersion ceremony usually starts with cleaning the body as by a shower. The person is covered and the covering removed as the person enters totally naked into the warm mikveh waters, which are usually about four feet deep. (When the ceremony is done in a public place such as a lake the candidate wears a loose-fitting garment). The person being immersed went into the water by himself, stretching out his arms, flexing his fingers, fluttering his eyelids he squats down in fetal position into the water until he is completely covered by water. Blessings are recited and the person goes bending into the water. Flexing the fingers and toes, fluttering the eyelids was to insure that the water touched every part of the body. According to traditional Jewish law, three male witnesses must be present. . Every part of the body must come in contact with water. Nothing is kept back from the water and so nothing is kept back from

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God. A proselyte was considered a newborn child after being baptized; it is as though he is born through the waters of the mother's womb again.

(Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, Rabbi Rachel Cowan, Dr. Nan Fink, Dr. David Gordis, Rabbi Irving Greenberg, Yossi Klein Halevi, Dr. Edward Hoffman, Dr. Walter Jacob, Professor Julius Lester, Florence Melton, Patti Moskovitz, Rabbi Barbara Penzner, Lena Romanoff, Susan Weidman Schneider, Rabbi Harold Schulweis, Rabbi Alan Silverstein, Rabbi Neal Weinberg, and Professor Zvi Zohar

Judaism Resource Center, 74 Hauppauge Road, Room 53, Commack, New York 11725.

<http://www.convert.org/process.htm>)

The circumcision and baptism were given to the whole household including infants. However the children of under age were given the option to option out of the Jewish faith as they come of age. The children born to the proselyte were then given circumcision as usual. (Alec Gilmore, "Jewish Antecedents" in *Christian Baptism* Alec Gilmore, ed., (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1959, 75-82.)

Talmudic references for these are found in Conversion with Parents:
Ketuvot 11a

The conversion of an infant or child has Jewish legal sanction. According to the Talmud (Ketubot 11a), it is permissible for a religious court (a bet din) to convert a

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gentile infant. The basis in Jewish law is that it is a privilege to be Jewish (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 268:7). Therefore, a minor can be converted even though not mature enough to understand the act because making the minor Jewish is performing a favor for that infant or child. <http://www.convert.org>

Immersing the Child as part of conversion, on the Court's "Daat":

Ketuvot 11a

Child's Option of Refusing conversion upon Maturing: Ketuvot 11a

Talmud adds that upon reaching the age of consent, (by Jewish law, 12 for a girl and 13 for a boy), the child is permitted to protest. In other words, the entire conversion is conditional. The child has the right to protest when he or she reaches the age of bar/bat mitzvah. Some rabbis formalize this, and actually ask the child upon reaching majority if he or she wishes to protest the conversion. Some rabbis even require re-immersion in a mikveh.

Thus the bar/bat mitzvah is a reaffirmation of a ceremony (circumcision and joining the covenant people as an 8 day old infant) performed long before.

3

John's Baptism

BAPTISM OF REPENTANCE AND REFORMATION

The most commonly known baptism is the Baptism of John. What was the baptism of John calling for? What was its significance in the Jewish tradition?

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They are evident from the following verses.

Matt. 3:6 confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

Matt. 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. ...

John's baptism was not Christian baptism- it was a Jewish baptism of washing with a new spiritual meaning. In this case it is always referred to as the baptism 'unto repentance'. John's call was the coming of Christ is at hand. John's baptism was the prophetic message, that those born of Jews are not the real Israelites and they needed to repent and become real spiritual Israelite.

Acts 19:1-7 While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?" "John's baptism," they replied. Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all.

So we have the answer straight. John's baptism was baptism of repentance and also of discipleship. John's baptism was also symbolic of rebirth- being dead to the sin and reborn. Act 19:17 indicate that John's baptism was prophetic indicating the coming of Messiah. How did this baptism differ in order to indicate the messianic expectation? Incidentally John's baptismal mode was not by all probability total immersion. The candidate walked down into the water and the baptizer scooped up water from the river and poured it over the candidate. They

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then came up out of it. There was an officiating Person and a community of witnesses. This will explain several passages such as the following. We shall later show that early Christian baptism also followed this method.

Acts 8:36 -39 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

Matt. 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water.
Mark 1:10 As Jesus was coming up out of the water,

There is a group of followers of John called Johannanites or Mandaeanes (<http://home.fireplug.net/~rshand/streams/scripts/johannite.html>) are still in existence in Iran and Iraq who baptize in this manner. Mandaens are a Gnostic sect. They baptize in the name of the Great Light. Mandaean baptism is called *masbata*. (A video of baptism by this group can be seen in the video series Legacy published by the Maryland and Public Television and central Independent Television program Iraq: The Cradle of Civilization distributed by Ambrose Video Publishing. Inc., 1290 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 2245, New York NY 10104. This is an educational video produced by the secular organization. You can also see an interesting power point presentation of the baptisms in the following site: <http://www.mandaeanworld.com/photoindex.html>.) The Mandaens baptized adults, children and even infants. The mode of baptism is also not fixed.. Infants are baptized by sprinkling, children are

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baptized by partial immersion and sprinkling, adults are baptized by either partial immersion and sprinkling or by self immersion. Mandaen baptism is not a one time event. It can be repeated at every phase of the growth. Mandaean life starts with baptism and ends with baptism. Mandaean also baptise their dead also as they are believed to be trapped in bodies as long as they are not sanctified by water baptism.

“They Clad in white garments and speaking softly in an ancient and unfamiliar tongue, she enters the *yardna* (river). There is a man in white, a *tarmida* (priest) holding an olive staff and beckoning her to enter.

The priest soon takes the woman by the hand and baptises her as others eagerly wait, in the brilliant sunshine, for their turn to enter the river, for you see only one Soul must enter the river at one time. The woman slowly makes her way out to the bank to be greeted by a chorus of joyous shouts from the attending crowd.... Her Soul purified, cleansed and strengthened by baptism; she waits to receive the sacraments of bread, oil and water.” <http://www.yardna.org/>

Both John's baptism and the Qumran washings were connected with repentance and undoubtedly had their origin in Numbers 19 : 1-22 and similar passages about purification in the Pentateuch.

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Historically therefore John's baptism must have been an out growth of the Essene Traditions and was probably not by total immersion. It was a ceremonial washing. It was not considered a conversion process in which the baptizee was considered a gentile. They were already Jews, who had been in the covenant through circumcision and needed only repentance or turning back to God.

Jn 13:14 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but he is clean all over; and you are clean"

Evidently the baptismal mode somehow indicated the death and resurrection of the messiah.

4

Baptism of Jesus

**IDENTIFICATION WITH HUMANITY IN ITS SIN
TO FULFILL ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS = TO FULFILL ALL
MOSAIC LAWS
FOR ANOINTING AS PROPHET, PRIEST AND KING
TO BE REVEALED TO THE WORLD AS THE LAMB OF GOD**

If John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, what was its relevance to Jesus? Why did Jesus go to John for baptism? What was the mission of John in terms of Jesus? Why did John Baptize?

At one time Jesus asked the following question.

Matt. 21:25 John's baptism --where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or from men?" They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?'

What was Jesus pointing to? What were they to believe from John's baptism? Hear what John himself says:

John 1:31 I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel." I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.'

As far as John was concerned, he came baptizing to reveal Jesus as the Lamb of God.

John 1:33-34 I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, 'The man on whom you see the Spirit

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come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

Unless Jesus came forward without a confession of sin and the heaven attested to his perfectness, it could not be done. But since Jesus did not confess, it could not possibly have been the baptism unto repentance. Here again we should distinguish between two types of sins. Jesus was sinless. In what way? He did not commit personal transgressions and his intents were always pure. But living in a sinful society implies non-committal indirect sin. This is social or communal in nature. As a member of the community he lived and he bore the sins of the community. A community that exploited the poor, that kept a caste society, that kept a hierarchy, that upheld the social order of have and the have-nots, and that maintained a self-centered society is indirectly sinning. Remember Jesus lived in a society where slavery was the order of the society. Women and children were traded for cash, to pay off debts. Though all people living in the society do not do these, they all partook of the sin indirectly. The evil of society is the responsibility of every one in the society. Jesus was a carpenter and a poor one. Remember Mary had to bring a pair of pigeons as her thanks offering instead of a lamb, because Jesus' parents were poor. In this sense when he entered Jordan, Jesus was identifying himself with the rest of mankind and was confessing these sins, which he could not undo as an individual even in incarnation. So don't be carried away by the term he was sinless as an absolute statement taken out of the context.

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The purpose of the Baptism of Jesus was not remission of personal sin – because he did not commit any personal sin. But to be the true Lamb of God, worthy of sacrifice – lamb without blemish- in terms of law, he has to be attested as such by an independent authority. It was to fulfill the law - all righteousness in accordance with the regulations laid down by God – Jesus went down to be baptized.

Matt. 3:13-15 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

What is the meaning of "to fulfill all righteousness"?
--

Fulfill all righteousness would mean only ceremonial fulfillment. "Righteousness" is only a legal fulfillment. A righteous person is not a sinless person in the absolute sense or does not even come near to the holiness of God. Ezekiel defines righteousness and unrighteousness.

Ezek. 18:5-13 "Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just and right. He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor's wife or lie with a woman during her period. He does not oppress anyone, but returns what he took in pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked. He does not lend at usury or take excessive interest. He withholds his hand from doing wrong and judges fairly between man and man. He follows my decrees and faithfully keeps my laws. That man is righteous; he will surely live, declares the Sovereign LORD.

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Paul classifies the same in the following verse.

1Cor. 6:9-10 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Of course Jesus kept the laws. Therefore he was righteous. Then what is this fulfilling righteousness?

Jesus was the Lamb of God. But John's ministry was one step more than that. He in the tradition of Moses and Samuel and all other prophets was to sanctify and anoint Jesus also as the blood bearing High Priest to the whole humanity. But just as priests, prophets and kings were ceremoniously anointed and purified by sprinkling of oil, water, blood etc. in the presence of the congregation, Jesus' anointing for the beginning of his messianic ministry was marked by ceremonial washing and anointing by John. It was therefore obedience to the Mosaic Law. John the Baptist was of Priestly class, being the son of Zechariah and was born after Zechariah served the Holy of Holies. John also was a prophet of high status so that he combined the Priest and the Prophet in himself. Hence Jesus declares that:

Matt. 11:11 I tell you the truth: Among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

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Luke 7:28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

So there was none more suitable for this work than John.

Hebr. 9:24 -26 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. .. Then Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Num. 4:3 Count all the men from thirty to fifty years of age who come to serve in the work in the Tent of Meeting.

Luke 3:23 Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph, the son of Heli,

Jesus was anointed at the age of thirty according to the law. Until that time he led a life that is totally pleasing to God, in obedience to the law. He was thirty and it was the right time for drafting into service.

What is the lawful method of anointing a priest according to Mosaic Law? Could Jesus be anointed as Priest under caste system? How could a non-Levite become a Priest? What justification could lawfully give for the anointing of Jesus as Priest?

He was not a Levite. So he was anointed in the order of Melchizedek. There are Brahmins who are born in Brahmin family (Levitical tribe).

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But there are others who became priests by anointing long before Levites were even selected. Melchizedek was one of them. We meet Melchizedek in Genesis all of a sudden.

Gen. 14:18 Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High,

We do not hear about this type of priests or priestly kings any time later. Evidently there were a people who were called out to serve Yahweh and Melchizedek the Philistine was the last of these High Priests. Though we do not hear about this order - a higher order than even the Levitical order - this type of priestly order was well known at the time of the David

In the commonwealth of Israel all the elect were to be a holy nation and a priest to the nations.

Exod. 19:6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

The purpose of this calling was not to receive privileges, but to receive a responsibility.

1Pet. 2:9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

For practical purposes the first born of the family were to be the Priests to the family. Then Levites were substitutes for the entire first born among the Jews. The first-born were to be redeemed from the drafting by payment to the Temple.

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Num. 3:12 "I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine,

Num. 3:13 for all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether man or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD."

The first born in the royal family of David has the right to the High Priest in a law that was primal. This is the Melchizedekian order. It was this primal right that David exercised when he entered the temple and partook of the shew bread, which Jesus referred as his authority.

Ps. 110:4 The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

Hebr. 5:6 And he says in another place, "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek." Hebr. 5:10 and was designated by God to be high priest in the order of Melchizedek.

Hebr. 6:20 where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Hebr. 7:1 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him,

Hebr. 7:10 because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor. Hebr. 7:11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come --one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron?

Hebr. 7:15 And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, Hebr. 7:17 For it is declared: "You are a priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek."

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Was all righteousness fulfilled in this anointing of Messiah?

This is how Moses consecrated Aaron and his son.

Exod. 29:4 -7 Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and wash them with water. Take the garments and dress Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod itself and the breast piece. Fasten the ephod on him by its skillfully woven waistband. Put the turban on his head and attach the sacred diadem to the turban. Take the anointing oil and anoint him by pouring it on his head.

Lev. 8:6 - 33 Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. . Then Moses took the anointing oil and anointed the tabernacle and everything in it, and so consecrated them. ...He poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him to consecrate him. He then presented the bull for the sin offering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on its head. Moses slaughtered the bull and took some of the blood, and with his finger he put it on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar. He poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. So he consecrated it to make atonement for it.Then from the basket of bread made without yeast, which was before the LORD, he took a cake of bread, and one made with oil, and a wafer; he put these on the fat portions and on the right thigh. He put all these in the hands of Aaron and his sons and waved them before the LORD as a wave offering. Then Moses took them from their hands and burned them on the altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordination offering, a pleasing aroma, an offering made to the LORD by fire. He also took the breast --Moses' share of the ordination ram --and waved it before the LORD as a wave offering, as the LORD commanded Moses. Then Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood from the altar and sprinkled them on

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Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. So he consecrated Aaron and his garments and his sons and their garments.

Thus consecration for priesthood took several aspects:

- washing
- dressing in proper attire
- diadem on head
- anointing with oil and blood
- wave offering
- ordination offering
- sacrifice of a bull (in Jesus' case no sin sacrifice was necessary)

Matt. 3:16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.

Acts 4:27 Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed.

Acts 10:38 how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

I will leave this dissertation for those who would pursue it.

We can see that baptism was indeed a rite of initiation or rite of passage.

This passage was not necessarily one of “sinner” to “saved”, as in the case of Jesus himself.

5

**Baptism of Christ's Disciples
REPENT FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS HERE**

John 4:1-2 The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples.

So Jesus was indeed baptizing even before the Christian Baptism was in vogue. Their mode of baptism also must have been same. Jesus himself did not baptize. What type of baptism were the disciples of Jesus doing? Remember this was before the cross. The sacrifice is not over. It was the preparation for the sacrifice, which is repentance. So Jesus' disciples went ahead with what John was doing, with greater zeal proclaiming as Jesus himself did, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." They were making disciples for Jesus. But the baptisms, which Jesus gives, were to follow from it. John declares thus:

Matt. 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

John's baptism was the prophetic message that those born of Jews are not the real Israelite; and they needed to repent and become real spiritual Israelite. Jesus took up this aspect without any change at all and gave orders to his disciples to continue with the Johananine baptism. So we see Pharisees compares the baptism only in terms of number of disciples. The mode of baptism of John was the same as the mode of baptism of

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Jesus' disciples. The purpose of baptism was to make disciples. The difference was the master. In John's baptism, those who were baptized were John's disciples while in the baptism given by the disciples of Jesus were making disciples for Jesus. This has to be devoid of messianic appearance as Jesus was already there. But it must have been looking forward to the redemption viz. cross and resurrection. How was this represented in the baptismal mode?

John 3:22-24 After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judaea; and there he abode with them and baptised. And John also was baptising in Aenon, near Salim, because there was a great deal of water there; and they came to him and were baptised.

So the mode of baptism was the same and the call and message were also same. It actually was a method of making disciples for Jesus.

6

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

ONE FAITH, ONE LORD, ONE BAPTISM = INTO ONE BODY

On the day of the Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus, on the day of the celebration of giving of the tablets of law to the people of Israel, Jesus baptized his believers into his body through the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

It was prophesized by the Prophets the last of which was John.

Matt. 3:11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

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Mark 1:8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Luke 3:16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

After he was resurrected, and after he has done his priestly duty of carrying his own blood into the heavenly holy of holies Jesus declared:

Acts 1:5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." Acts 11:16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Peter quotes Joel in his Pentecostal sermon:

Acts 2:16-17 No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions; your old men will dream dreams.

The word for Holy Spirit is Ruh in Aramaic and Pneumatos in Greek. Pneuma is translated into English as fluid (liquid and gas) and indirectly refers to water. It emphasizes the formless (Aroopi) nature of the Holy Spirit. But then the Holy Spirit like water can be in you (You can drink the water and keep it in your stomach) or it can engulf you totally (as when you are in a pool),

Paul records this baptism as a baptism into one body. It is what oil and water does to the flour to make into a loaf. The baptism is what makes the cells a living part of the organism that gives life to the world - the

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church. The loaf becomes bread only when it is passed through the fire and is baked. It is the common suffering that all believers will have to go through in this world, so that they may be the salt of the earth and light of the world.

1Cor. 12:13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free --and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

Eph. 4:5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

To become a child of God and be a part of the Church, which is the body of Christ, these are the essentials.

One Lord – which is Jesus the Christ; One faith, which is the faith proclaimed by the Apostles which were given once and forever to the saints; One Baptism – Baptism with the Holy Spirit. Water baptism does not make you a child of God and a part of the body of Christ. It only makes you a part of the local community church. Each church has its own modes. The communities may not accept each other's modes. This is because the water baptism is an external sign and depicts disciplining. It is your church that disciplines you. Therefore you are baptized in that church's mode.

Jesus defines the function of the Holy Spirit for us:

John 16:7 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

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John 16:8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:

John 6:63 The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

The function of the Holy Spirit is: conviction of sin leading to repentance, and giving new life. This is what it means to be a Christian - born anew, a new creature, and sons of God.

Rom. 6:3 -4 Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Gal. 3:26-27 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

All this refer to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and has nothing to do with water Baptism? Water baptism is the outward symbol of the inward baptism of the Holy Spirit. We should therefore expect the water baptism to represent the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The picture of the Holy Spirit pouring on to the person should be present in the Water Baptism. It is the coming in of the Holy Spirit that causes faith in the believer.

7

**The Baptism of Fire
CROSS AND ITS SALVATION
CROSS AND ITS JUDGMENT
MARTYRDOM BY FIRE**

As in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Baptism with fire certainly refers to the unifying sacrificial experience of the church for the redemption of humanity. It points to the creation of the Church as a living organism and refers to the appearing of tongues of fire in association with the coming of the Holy Spirit on the last Pentecost. Act 2:3.

But it has other meaning that echoes.

Matt. 3:9 -12 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Luke 3:16-17 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

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Both these verses evidently refer to the judgment. This is connected to the judgment at the second coming as opposed to baptism with Holy Spirit at the first coming and grace. Church age started with baptism in the Holy Spirit and the Kingdom Age starts with the baptism of fire. So we should not pray for baptism with fire. We are baptized with the Holy Spirit and are spared this baptism.

Others refer to this as the suffering that believers may go through in order that they may be made pure and perfect. It may be also referring to the actual fire through which many martyrs went through.

8

Baptism for the Dead

BAPTISM BY PROXY = SALVATION THROUGH BAPTISM EXPECTATION OF RESURRECTION

1Cor. 15:29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?

What can this mean? There are many interpretations to this passage:

- Proxy Baptism. I believe that the most likely answer is this. Like many even today, there were people who believed in the mystical transforming effect and salvatory effect of the ceremony of baptism. So it was imperative for any one who died to be baptized to go to heaven. Since they were dead, a proxy was made. The double error is

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evident. These cults of the period of Paul are known by the name Cerinthians and Macionites. Cerinthians, Macionites and other heretics had a custom to baptize a living person in the name of the dead who died believing but without getting baptism so that the dead may be considered as baptized. Paul is using it for his argument for favor of resurrection. Otherwise there will be no reason for their proxy baptism. Paul is not supporting this action, but is only using their own argument to establish his point. Mormons perform this baptism even today. You can check out their reasoning in the section Other Points of Views

- As creed of faith for baptism. Chrysostom interprets it in terms of the creed of faith, which says, "I believe in the resurrection of the dead" as a precondition for baptism. In the early church, believers were indoctrinated before baptism and they were to confess their faith in the assembly before baptism. The confession most probably involved these words.
- Martyrs. Spanheim believes that it refers to the martyrs. Their example of courting death in expectation of resurrection will encourage people to be baptized.
- Fullness of numbers. Olshausen interprets that all who are converted are baptized for the good of the dead as fulfillment of the days will come only after the fullness of numbers of believers are reached.
Rom 11:12-13
- Washing the Dead Bodies. There is however another explanation, which I believe, is probably more correct explanation from among

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all. It is the practice of all cultures to wash their dead one's bodies and dress them in their best before they are consigned to the earth or burned. What Paul is asking here is the reason for it. This is in expectation of the resurrection of the bodies. If only the spirits are going to be alive after the death, why bother about the bodies

- Baptism for the dead in Mandaen tradition: As death approaches, the dying person is bathed, water is brought in from the river, and the dying person is undressed and then washed with a threefold sprinkling from head to feet. He/she is then lifted and placed on clean bedding facing the North Star and is then dressed in a new rasta, with gold or gold threads sown on the right side of the stole and silver or silver threads sown on the left side. Weeping is forbidden. (To die at the sacred season of *Panja* means that the soul of the deceased will fly quickly to the worlds of light and escape the tortures and dangers of the purgatories.) The dead person is interned facing north and the tomb goes unmarked. “The body is nothing other than dirt and rubbish, once the Soul has left it.” This is a Mandaean saying. At the moment the body is being lowered into the tomb the *lofani* (ritual meal) is begun . A *Zidqa Brikha*, prayers and baptisms are also performed.

<http://www.essene.com/B'nai-Amen/vbelief.htm>

9

**Baptism of Christians
LIVING TESTIMONY
DISCIPLESHIP WITHIN THE FAITHFUL**

With all these types of Baptism that interleaves each other we have to understand the Christian baptism in those terms.

Matt. 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

This command, we should notice, is not given to the believers; it was given to the disciples. What did the disciples understand by this commandment? We should remember that they were already baptizing people as proxy to Jesus. We have dwelt with this as the baptism of Jesus. This command was therefore simply a commandment to continue the same. Jesus did not institute Baptism nor changed its meaning. He simply told the disciples to continue what they were already doing by baptizing and making them disciples.

Jesus gave baptism as the initiation of the new Way to both Jews and the Gentiles in the great commission. Most probably when Jews came into Christianity, the same initiation ceremony was performed to become a Christian. We should remember that there was a strong Jewish push within the early church which even required circumcision as mandatory to become a Christian. When a gentile joined the Jewish faith both water baptism and circumcision were performed. When Christianity – the new Way emerged out of the Jews, these were the most appropriate symbols. In accepting the baptism they were saying that we were alienated from

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God and are now joining the Way and accepting the faith in Jesus Christ. In the early church it was also necessary to learn certain doctrinal creeds and the Lord's Prayer before this ceremony.

In the next section where a study is made to find what was the correct historical mode of baptism that the Christians used we see that they changed the manner of baptism to strictly represent the baptism into Christ as opposed to baptisms of the Jews and other religions. Whether Jesus made this change or not is not clear. If Jesus did teach them and institute baptism (though it is not given in the scriptures) we should assume that he changed the mode to depict the new way and its message. It is also possible that early church did it themselves to distinguish them from the Jewish baptism and the baptisms of other faiths. If this is true it probably was made at the first Council held in Jerusalem under the Chairmanship of James the brother of Jesus.

Mark 16:16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. .

Acts.2:41 for those who received his word were baptized and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Ever since that day baptism was employed to add souls to the Church-the concept of the Church was new. So the early church which was predominantly Jewish wanted to use both the circumcision and baptism when gentiles joined the Church. Jews were already circumcised, so they needed only baptism with water. For gentiles what were they to do?

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Col. 2:9-12 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

Paul's argument here is that, actually both the circumcision and baptism are not done by hands. He was referring to baptism with the Holy Spirit. He claims that baptism now replaces circumcision. Baptism is the symbol of the new covenant and its continuation. Both are meaningful only when it is spiritual. They have no meaning in the physical and "done with hand". We also know that Paul did not emphasize baptism in his ministry. When the circumcision movement took a nasty turn Paul declared that if we are to be materialistically legalistic demanding circumcision, "Christ is of no value to you". The same statement may be made regarding baptism. If anyone think that baptism by water is a legal obligation of every believer, "Christ is of no value" to them. This is because they have rejected author of salvation and accepted the works of their own as the source of salvation.

Baptism historically found new emphasis when persecution broke out from all quarters. Christianity became an underground movement. It was too dangerous to be a Christian. In order to safeguard the Church, strict regulatory membership and initiation ceremonies were instituted. Baptism now found new emphasis and meaning. Every one who wants to join the Church will have to proclaim their allegiance and Lordship of

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Jesus before all the assembly and undergo the humiliating initiation. This way every member knew who were their allies and who were not. Their very life depended on it.

To these early churches added two other forms of Baptisms, viz. Baptism of desire and Baptism by blood.

10

Baptism by Blood

MARTYRDOM

This is the baptism which Jesus took and which the Apostles and the martyrs took.

Matthew 20:22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

Matthew 20:23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with:

Early Church recognized martyrs who died in the course of persecution even when they were not baptized with water. The blood was a better element for baptism than water. The furniture in the Holy of Holies were baptized with blood, while those who entered into the outer court and into the Holies were washed only with water from the laver.

11

Baptism of Desire

When a person desires baptism it is taken as its fulfillment. One does not have to physically get baptized to obtain its spiritual blessings. This is particularly true about those gentiles who because of their social and political situation could not openly declare their allegiance.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

CHAPTER THREE

BASIC FACTS ABOUT BAPTISM

Before we discuss the controversies first let us establish some basic facts:

A. Baptism does not save

The question here is, is baptism necessary for salvation?

Roman Catholic Church, Orthodox Churches, Lutheran church and several Episcopal churches believe that baptism is the direct instrument of regeneration. Roman Catholicism teaches that unless a person is baptized he will be excluded from heaven. (In that case the thief who was on the right hand of Jesus could never enter paradise. If it were necessary, Jesus would have at least made a rain to baptize him. A rain in the midst of an earthquake and darkness would have made a nicer background.). Some (probably most) Pentecostal Churches believe in the mystical power of baptism by total immersion (no other mode will do) as a necessity for salvation. Some do not confess this but actually believes in it. It was these false mystic power of baptism that made the early heretics to baptize living as a proxy for the dead.

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Even in many traditional churches children who are not baptized are not buried in the cemetery. May be we can interpret it as that they do not belong to the church until baptized. All evangelicals and Pentecostals agree that baptism being a ceremony cannot save. If baptism saves, it was very easy to get saved.

It is clearly the gospel that saves us. But what is the gospel? It is explained by Paul in

1 Cor. 15:1-4: *"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."*

The gospel is defined as the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus for our sins. Baptism is not mentioned here.

Paul said that he came to preach the gospel, not to baptize:

"I am thankful that I did not baptize any of you except Crispus and Gaius, so no one can say that you were baptized into my name. (Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..." (1 Cor. 1:14-17)

If baptism is necessary for salvation then why did Paul avoided it as far as possible? Why did he not mention it in context of salvation anywhere?

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Acts, Peter was preaching the gospel, people got saved, and then they were baptized.

Acts 10:44-46"While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, 'Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.' So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

These people were saved. They were given the gift of tongues, which is a gift the Holy Spirit to the believers. (1 Cor. 14:1-5) If they had the evil spirit they might still speak in tongues but they will be praising their gods. Evidently they were saved before they were baptized. Often misrepresented quotation to support the salvific function of baptism is the verse:

John 3:5, "Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit.'"

There are many who claim that the "born of water" here represents water baptism. This is a clear misreading of the text taken out of context. Let us read the context.

Joh 3:2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Joh 3:3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Joh 3:4 Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the

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second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Joh 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Joh 3:7 Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

This interview with Nicodemus took place before the public ministry of Jesus. Jesus told Nic that unless a man is born again he couldn't be saved. The response of Nic was how could he go back to his mother's womb. Now notice that Jesus says:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Jesus evidently mentions two births. Born of water, Born of Spirit. These are two distinct births. Both are necessary to enter into the kingdom of God. Then in traditional style the same idea is repeated to explain the two births, Born of flesh and Born of the Spirit. Then he emphasizes, you must be born again. Every man is born of water, i.e. born of flesh. He must be born again in the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God. Being born from the watery womb makes a person fleshly person – a child of Adam – a living soul. Being born of the Spirit makes a man-the living soul into a child of the second Adam – spiritual person. Kingdom of God for mankind is through Spiritual rebirth in Christ. Flesh gives birth to flesh. Only the Spirit can give birth to a Spiritual being – the transformed being capable of entering into the Kingdom of God.

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1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

1Co 15:22 for even as in Adam all die, so also in the Christ all shall be made alive

Jesus began to baptize in the traditional manner of John of repentance soon after, delivering the same message of impending Kingdom of God. This was not the Christian baptism of salvation, because Jesus was not crucified, nor did he ascend to heaven and the Holy Spirit was not given to them

Another passage, which is often quoted, is

Acts 2:38, "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Notice that salvation is not mentioned in this verse. Repentance is connected with baptism. It has always been so connected. Repentance alone will not lead to salvation. Baptism is an expression of repentance. It is Jesus who saves. But repentance is the first step.

1 Pet. 3:21, "and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also - not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

What does baptism correspond to? Is it the flood? Or, is it the ark? What was it that saved Noah and his family? Was it the water or the ark? Obviously, it was the Ark. Noah built and entered the ark by faith and

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was saved (Heb. 11:7). The waters destroyed the unbelievers. (2 Pet. 2:5; 3:6). It was the Ark that saved. Noah entered the ark by faith. Baptism here evidently refers to the Ark, not to the waters. That is why the rest of the verse says, "not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God" as referred in Col. 2:11-12.

Again it is not evident that the baptism referred to here refers to water baptism. Mathew Henry explains it as follows:

“Noah's salvation in the ark upon the water, which carried him above the floods, set forth the salvation of all true believers. That temporal salvation by the ark was a type of the eternal salvation of believers by baptism of the Holy Spirit. To prevent mistakes, the apostle declares what he means by saving baptism; not the outward ceremony of washing with water, which, in itself, does no more than put away the filth of the flesh, but that baptism, of which the baptismal water formed the sign. Not the outward ordinance, but when a man, by the regeneration of the Spirit was enabled to repent and profess faith, and purpose a new life, uprightly, and as in the presence of God. Let us beware that we rest not upon outward forms. Let us learn to look on the ordinances of God spiritually, and to inquire after the spiritual effect and working of them on our consciences. We would willingly have all religion reduced to outward things. But many who were baptized, and constantly attended the ordinances, have remained without Christ, died in their sins, and are now past recovery. Rest not then till the Spirit of Christ and the blood of

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Christ cleanse you. In rising from the death Jesus assured us of this purification and peace.”

Titus 3:5, "he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit."

The washing of rebirth can only be that washing of the blood of Christ that cleanses us. It is not the symbol that saves, but the reality. The reality is the blood of Christ.

If baptism were necessary for salvation, we would expect to find it stressed whenever the gospel is presented in Scripture.

Though Peter mentions baptism in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38), his sermon from Solomon's portico in the Temple (Acts 3:12-26), Peter makes no mention to baptism. He links forgiveness of sin to repentance (3:19). If baptism is necessary for the forgiveness of sin, why didn't Peter say so in Acts 3?

Paul never made baptism as a part of his gospel presentation. In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul gives a summary of the gospel message he preached. There is no mention of baptism. In 1 Corinthians 1:17, Paul states that "Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel," thus clearly differentiating the gospel from baptism. That is difficult to understand if baptism is necessary for salvation. If baptism were part of the gospel itself, necessary for salvation, what good would it have done Paul to preach the gospel, but not baptize? No one would have been

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saved. Paul clearly understood baptism to be separate from the gospel, and hence in no way efficacious for salvation. In Galatians 5:1-12 Paul rejects the argument that circumcision is necessary for salvation. But Paul makes no alternate claim that baptism is required in place of circumcision, but emphasizes that we are saved by faith through Jesus Christ alone.

The purpose writing the book of John was that we "might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Therefore, if we want to know about salvation, we need to look into this book. But there is no reference to water baptism at all in this book. The only reference to it is in the conversation to Nicodemus well ahead of any institution of baptism and could not have been referring to that at all. To add force to the importance of John's Gospel regarding this controversy about water baptism, it should be mentioned that it was written in about 90 A.D. This means it was written well after the final Pentecost. But John never mentioned baptism in connection with salvation.

Perhaps the most convincing refutation of the view that baptism is necessary for salvation is those who were saved apart from baptism. We have no record of the apostles being baptized, yet Jesus pronounced them clean of their sins (John 15:3--note that the Word of God, not baptism, is what cleansed them). The penitent woman (Luke 7:37-50), the paralytic man (Matthew 9:2), and the publican (Luke 18:13-14) also experienced forgiveness of sins apart from baptism. The Bible also gives us an

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example of people who were saved before being baptized. In Acts 10:44-48, Cornelius and those with him were converted through Peter's message. That they were saved before being baptized is evident from their reception of the Holy Spirit (v. 44) and the gifts of the Spirit (v. 46) before their baptism. Indeed, it is the fact that they had received the Holy Spirit (and hence were saved) that led Peter to baptize them (cf. v. 47). In every case of conversion, baptism comes after salvation showing clearly that baptism is not part of the salvation

What then is implied in the baptism? Confession is the believing in heart and confessing with the lips. Every faith must be declared in action. Baptism is an open act of faith and the act of joining the church. It has no meaning when performed in isolation. Hence all baptisms were performed in the open among the community of believers. It is the community that makes the difference. Salvation is becoming part of the body of Christ, which is the Church. The teaching here is that the salvation is not individual as most modern preaching emphasize. Man is not saved individually, but by becoming part of the body of Christ. Christ takes up not individuals. He saves his bride - the church. Hence in a wider sense baptism leads to salvation. Not the act but becoming part of the church.

Let us look at some of the relevant verses.

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

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It does not follow from baptism, but from believing Jesus.

Mar 16:15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

This verse must be interpreted along with

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teach all nations --- baptize them. Baptize whom? The nations

Preach gospel----- believe and baptized are saved

You were told to baptize all nations. Make them disciples. Teach them the Way. But only those who believe among them are saved.

When the Greek text of Matthew 28:19 says "Make disciples of all nations," there is no grammatical basis for saying that this means, "individuals from all nations, not nation"; and that the "baptizing *them*" refers to "those who were made disciples". Rather, it commands, "Disciple all nations, baptizing them (nations)." *Matheteusate panta ta ethne* (disciple all the nations) *baptizontes autous*, (baptizing them). The accusative case pronoun "them" (*autous*) refers to "nations" (*ethne*), the nearest and obvious noun referent. It cannot refer to "disciples." "Make disciples" is a verb (*matheteusate*).

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Gal. 3:26-27 You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

Baptism is clothing - an outer cover of declaration of faith in the open. A child born needs a cloth to protect him from cold and heat. So is baptism. But lack of clothing will not make the child an unborn entity.

Acts 15:10-11 Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

Is Baptism Necessary for Salvation?

A discussion the controversial versus

Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen

We have here a command of Christ that we should make disciples of all nations, and be instrumental in disciplining them. Baptism was simply a means of initiation as a disciple. If we read the verse carefully we notice that the order make disciples is explains as baptizing. You make disciples by baptizing people. They are not two separate acts. John baptized and

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made disciples. Jesus- actually his apostles - baptized and made disciples for Jesus. So when we go into nations, we make them disciples by baptizing. It is in no indicative of any knowledge that these people have attained. That comes as a disciple grows in the community. Again this command was to those who were going out into the nations and not to the church. You are not ordered to baptize people who are in the church already or those who believe already.

It is particularly relevant to the mission fields where the gospel has not reached. One observation that people like us who have been immersed in other cultures was the need for mass baptism including the total households so that they will survive. Stray and rebels of communities who were baptized did more harm to the missions than good. Such individuals made good house servants to the missionaries and nothing more than that.

There is still another problem associated with the passage, which is the uncertainty of what type of baptism is referred to here. It is mostly assumed that water baptism is meant. However the passage does not indicate it. On the other hand what is specific here is not "baptism in" water but " baptism in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit". Great Gurus take disciples into their Gurukulas. They are then known as the children or pupils (chela) of the Guru. They live and learn in the home of the Guru. The teaching is not by words of mouth alone, but also through the living testimony and actions. The verse indicates just that

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process. In Gurukula this ritual is the giving of dakshina –a presentation of beetle leaves and arec nut to the teacher. Baptism here is just that token ritual, which takes candidates into the discipleship status. They then form part of the Christian community who live and learn together.

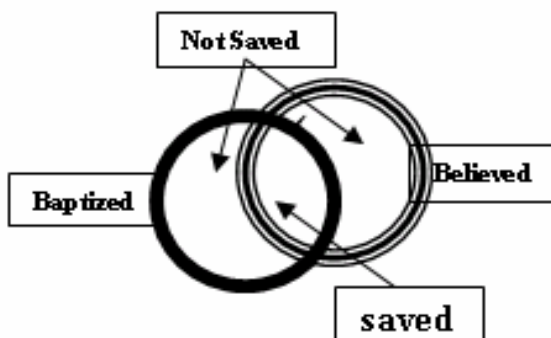
Mark 16:16

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned."

The most supportive passage indicating that baptism is part of salvation is this verse. Before we start discussing the verse, it should be noted here that this particular section of Mark is not found in many of the older manuscripts. Bible scholars usually consider it as a redaction. A redaction is something which some scribe wrote at the margin of the text as his own study note, which later was included within the text. Using such a controversial passage as a support for establishing a doctrine is a questionable act.

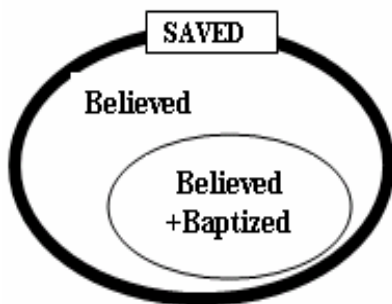
The argument here apparently seems to be:

Believe + Baptized = Saved



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But the logic is:



Believe	Baptized	Condemned	Saved	Clause
True	True	False	True	First
True	False	?	?	
False	True	True	False	Second
False	False	True	False	

But is it? While the first clause says that all who both believe and are baptized will be saved, it does not say that all who neither believe nor are baptized will not be saved. In other words, the clause does not exclude any group, while it does tell of a group of people who will be saved, namely, those who both believe and are baptized. But the second clause negates one group: those who do not believe will not be saved. There is no negation of the group of those who believe but are not baptized.

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Those who believe and are not baptized are not condemned in any way. **Thus, while the verse as a whole does teach that belief is essential to salvation, it does not teach that baptism is.**

Luke 7:30

But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him

"him" in this verse refers to John the Baptist. . Acts 18:24-19:7 clearly indicates that John's baptism was not sufficient because it was only a baptism of repentance. To reject John's baptism, therefore, was to reject John's testimony. John's testimony was that Jesus was the Savior (John 1:6-7) Jesus pointed this out clearly when he was questioned by the Pharisees by asking them in return "John's Baptism. From whence was it? From heaven or from the earth?"

John 3:5

Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God"

If we assume that "born of water" means water baptism and "born of the Spirit" means Holy Spirit Baptism this confirms that we need both water baptism and spirit baptism to be saved. Both these contentions are wrong. We are not speaking of baptisms but births. We are also accepting that entering into the Kingdom of God is what we mean by salvation. If as assumed it is indeed taking about baptisms, then the verse reads as follows:

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Joh 3:2-7 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

This interview with Nicodemus took place before the public ministry of Jesus. Jesus told Nic that unless a man is born again he couldn't be saved. The response of Nic was, how could he go back to his mother's womb. Now notice that Jesus says:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

Jesus evidently mentions two births- Born of water, Born of Spirit. These are two distinct births. Both are necessary to enter into the kingdom of God. Then in traditional style the same idea is repeated to explain the two births, Born of flesh and Born of the Spirit. Then he emphasizes, you must be born again. Every man is born of water, i.e. born of flesh. He must be born again in the Spirit to enter the Kingdom of God. Being born

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from the watery womb makes a person fleshly person – a child of Adam – a living soul. Being born of the Spirit makes a man - a living soul- into a child of the second Adam – spiritual person

1 Corinthians 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

The Rabbianic tradition and teaching supports this contention. Nicodemus as a teacher of the Jews – as a Rabbi – certainly knew of this "being born of water" as birth from the watery womb as his reply clearly indicates. So when Jesus refers to Pneuma (fluid – as the Greek word for Spirit implies) he assumes it as a second birth from the mother's womb. Jesus could not have been referring to Christian baptism because it was not instituted yet. Jesus began to baptize in the traditional manner of John of repentance soon after, delivering the same message of impending Kingdom of God. This was not the Christian baptism of salvation, because Jesus was not crucified, nor did he ascend to heaven and the Holy Spirit was not given to those who were baptized by the disciples of Jesus. Apostles themselves did not receive the Holy Spirit until they were sent on the mission and that only for the period. How could Jesus expect anyone to understand him if he was referring to something which was to come a full three years later?

If "born of water," meant water baptism, then verse 5 would contradict verse 6. Verse 6 requires being "born of the Spirit," as the only condition for salvation. Whereas verse 5 would require both being baptized in

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water and being born of the Spirit for salvation. In any argument you can increase the condition, but if we decrease the condition only the latter is valid.

There are people who would like to consider as being "born of water" as a figurative way of saying "born of the Spirit," then verse 5 does not contradict verse 6. Spirit is often compared to water in the scripture.

There is good reason to believe that "born of water" could be simply a figurative way of saying, "born of the Spirit." The word "water" in connection with salvation, the covenant, regeneration, rebirth, is often used in Scripture as a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself used water this way when He said:

John 7:37-39. If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living waterBut this He spoke concerning the Holy Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive....

In many Old and New Testament verses this symbolism cannot be found. See Isaiah 12:3, 35:6, 55:1; Ezekiel 36:25; Jeremiah 2:13; Zechariah 14:8, cf. Ezekiel 47:1-5; John 4:10; Revelation 21:6, 22:17.

Others claim that it refers to the Word of God, which is the cleansing agent. Paul alludes to this.

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However the conjunction *kai* (and) in Greek creates a problem here. It is true that *kai* is used occasionally with the implication "namely" (just as we use viz. in English) or "indeed"

Various views are given to explain Jesus' words about being born of water and the Spirit:

(1) The "water" refers to the natural birth, and the "Spirit" to the birth from above which I believe is the correct explanation in the context

(2) The "water" refers to the Word of God (Eph. 5:26). This is also not likely because, the Word of God is not brought in the context of discussion.

(3) The "water" refers to baptism as an essential part of regeneration. (This view contradicts other Bible verses that make it clear that salvation is by faith alone; e.g., John 3:16, 36; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5.)

(4) The "water" is a symbol of the Holy Spirit (John 7:37-39). This is using the multiple emphasis method usually employed in assertion. It would mean "born again in water which is the Holy Spirit."

(5) The "water" refers to the repentance ministry of John the Baptist, and the "Spirit" refers to the application by the Holy Spirit of Christ to an individual. The cleansing and regenerating power of the Holy Spirit (Ez. 36:25-27)

Let us Hear Paul

Rom. 6:3-10

"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God."

The Greek terms "like" or "likeness" (homoioima—"an abstract resemblance") epitomizes baptism as our "symbolic example" Baptism is not magic through which we actually die with Christ. Evidently it is only symbolic. There has to be something beyond the act which is internal - but not magical tantra, yantra and mantra - that saves us. That is Gnostic/New Age teaching.

The Greek word here translated "into" would be translated better "in" or "unto." Thus Robertson (Word Pictures Volume IV, pp. 361-362) writes regarding Romans 6:3: "Better, "were baptized unto Christ or in Christ. The translation "into" makes Paul say that the union with Christ was brought to pass by means of baptism, which is not his idea, for Paul was not a Sacramentarian.... Baptism is the public proclamation of one's inward spiritual relation to Christ attained before the baptism. See

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Galatians 3:27 where it is like putting on an outward garment or uniform. "Into his death"... So here "unto his death," "in relation to his death," which relation Paul proceeds to explain by the symbolism of the ordinance. In the first half of the chapter Paul is speaking in figures and symbols that he speaks of our old man was crucified with Christ. Though there are many who crucify themselves for penitence, we do not consider it a necessary baptism to undergo. Or do we? It would have been a good way to die with Christ and be raised with him. In fact I am told some Free Mason Cults do that as their initiation ceremony. Baptism is a simpler picture of dying to self and rising with Christ. Nevertheless it is a picture that can be painted in many ways. This is emphasized by Paul in I Corinthians 10:2-4, Paul wrote of the Israelites:

All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

Evidently the baptism the Israelites took is said to be "Baptized into Moses" What could this "into Moses" mean? Evidently it means that they took Moses as their leader and were disciplined by Moses into the ways of the Lord.

How were they baptized? Through their common experience of the cloud, the sea, the manna and the thirst. The fact that it is a symbol is emphasized by saying that "The rock that followed Israelites through the dessert was Jesus. Is Paul saying that the physical rock was indeed Jesus?

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Paul's theme of identification with Adam and with Second Adam runs through Romans 5 through 7. Through this water baptism we have through Adam (by the birth through the watery womb of a woman) we have inherited all that Adam received. Through the water baptism death passed upon all men (5:12); that the many are dead (5:15); all stand condemned (5:16); death reigns over all men (5:17)); judgment came on all (5:18); many were made sinners (5:19). With the birth in the Spirit, Spirit Baptism identifies us with Christ; we are justified and made righteousness (5:18); we are buried with Him and resurrected with him unto life (6: 4). For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all, but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord (6: 10-11).

The point here is a symbolic reenactment of rebirth will not save anyone, until he is really reborn in the spirit. So the only condition for salvation remains to be "born again" and nothing more. What is the point in being of flesh (material water) again?

"For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ."

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The baptismal process is the common experience of pain and suffering, starvation and thirst they underwent. As they were united with Drinking Jesus, we are all One in Christ Jesus. We are not one because of sacrament or ordinance. In these cases there were no real baptism with water at all. Not only that not a drop of water fell on them

Ex. 14:22 And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

But as for Pharaoh and his horse who were immersed:

Ex 14:28 The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained.

So we see that Israelites were saved from the waters. As for the cloud, this cloud was not water cloud. They were not rain clouds

Ex 13:21. And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night; ²² the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people

When the Pharaoh's army surrounded the Israelites the clouds separated them and protected them. The cloud was associated with the Angel of the Lord and the Angel of the Lord was indeed Jesus.

One can notice that the ark, the covering of the cloud, and the sea and typical symbols of burial and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus was placed in a

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burial chamber – a cave of rocks. Paul and Peter use this direct analogy of death, burial and resurrection as a symbol of baptism in Christ.

Gal. 3:26-27

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ"

It is not clear what baptism is intended here. Are baptized into Christ by water baptism or by Spirit baptism? The verb in Greek translated as "put on" or "clothed" has the meaning of putting on a badge or uniform of a soldier Paul uses this in all his writings (see Romans 13:14; Colossians 3:9f; Ephesians 4:22-24, 6:11, 14, I Thessalonians 5:8). We are justified by our faith in Christ, not by baptism. Baptism was only the public confession and pledge, like the soldier's sacramentum, an oath of allegiance to Christ, taking one's stand with Christ. This concept is employed by the Salvation Army when they replaced water baptism with bringing the believer under the Salvation Army banner.

Just as a soldier does not become a soldier by wearing the uniform and putting on a badge, water baptism does not make one joined with Jesus in his death or his resurrection.

In other words, even if "baptism" is taken as referring to water baptism, the language that Paul uses shows it to be an outward sign of something that has already happened inwardly. The baptizing itself then would be an entirely outward event, with no spiritual effect, but only of a spiritual

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significance. Hebrews 9:13 remind us that no outward ceremony has a real effect on the heart.

Col 2:11-12

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."

This verse is very similar to the symbolic statement of Romans 6:3-4. In this letter Paul uses baptism as the New Testament counterpart to circumcision in the Old Testament. Paul here asserts that baptism is the spiritual circumcision, the circumcision done without hands. If Circumcision led to salvation in the Old Testament, so does the baptism in the New Testament. Notice Paul bringing the words "without hands" "through faith" to show clearly the spiritual implication.

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit

This verse is sometimes used to prove that baptism is the means of regeneration. This verse refers to washing of regeneration and it will be far too imaginative to equate it with baptism with water. Hebrews 10:22 states that the regeneration, is accomplished by washing, or sprinkling with the blood of Christ. Revelation 1:5 confirm it.

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The "washing of regeneration" should be interpreted as "washing, which is regeneration which evidently is done by the Holy Spirit.

Heb. 10:22

Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water

In this verse faith is enhanced by hearts sprinkled (evidently with blood Hebrews 9:14; I Peter 1:2) to clean the heart from evil conscience and washing the outward body with pure water (evidently with the word of God) for outward holiness. We can boldly enter the holies only with our inward conscience and outward nature made holy and blameless. This is an echo of how the Old Testament Priests entered the holies (Leviticus 8:22; Hebrews 9:19; cf. Exodus 24:8) with their bodies washed and carrying the blood of the lamb as atonement.

Let us Hear Peter

I Peter 3:19-21

“being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also [Christ] went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through (see other translations for ‘through’) water. There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ .”

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This passage states unequivocally that it is not the external act of water baptism which is simply the removal of the filth from the flesh that saves, but the answer to good conscience towards God that saves. Good conscience towards God is what we call conversion, change towards God, rebirth, born again, faith in Jesus. If we only take the phrase "which now saves us, namely baptism" and affirm that baptism is necessary for salvation, we will be misrepresenting scripture. Peter was careful enough to expand on it to remove any such interpretation.

Here Ark is the symbol of salvation it is not the flood. At that time eight souls were saved *through water*. Peter then says that this water "symbolizes" baptism (as the NIV translates the Greek term *antitupon*, literally, "antitype"). Baptism now saves us, Peter says--just as the water "saved" Noah and his family. But, of course, we know that Peter was not asserting that there was some salvific aspect to the floodwaters. Floodwaters did not save Noah. It was the ark that saved Noah. It was God who saved Noah and his family because Noah believed God. Because of the righteousness of Noah (the head of the family), the entire family escaped destruction. Noah and his family did not receive the baptism. The earth received the baptism through which the (sins of the earth) sinners were washed away and the "answer of Good Conscience towards God" of Noah brought forth salvation to him and to his household. The earth was reborn. They were saved from the water baptism, which the sinners received, and they escaped. Peter is careful to inform his readers that he is not teaching baptismal regeneration, namely,

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that a person who submits to baptism is thereby regenerated, for he says, "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh." Baptism, Peter explains, does not wash away the filth of the flesh, either in a literal sense as a bath for the body, nor in a metaphorical sense as a cleansing for the soul. Peter goes on to define by saying that it is "the answer of a good conscience toward God," and this is actually accomplished, today, "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The Greek word for "appeal" or "*answer*" as in "*answer of a good conscience toward*" is translated in different ways.

Here is how the various versions render it:

King James Version American Standard Version New American Standard Berkeley Revised Standard Version Bible in Basic English Darby Bible Douay-Rheims Bible God's Word	answer of a good conscience interrogation of a good conscience appeal to a good conscience earnest seeking appeal to a good conscience making you free from the sense of sin demand .. of a good conscience, examination of a good conscience request .. for a clear conscience
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38: "*Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit....'*"

41: "*Save yourselves from this corrupt generation. Those who accepted his message were baptized....*"

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The confusion here simply is how we are going to connect "for (eis) remission of sin" with regard to "repent and baptized". If we look at other verses that define salvation we will see two factors: Repentance and Confession or repentance and fruits corresponding to the repentance. (Rom 10:9-10 John the Baptist Jn 3:-----) In the historic context of the last Pentecost this mass confession was expressed as coming forward to the baptism "in the name of Jesus". The baptism was not to be "in water", but "in the name". How were they to express this in concrete terms? It is evident that some form of baptismal mode befitting the occasion was used. . My contention is that, it could have been anything that declares the change. Considering the Essenic ties of the new Way, some form of Essenic baptism must have used. Many suggest that a sprinkling of water was the best possible mode. Considering that there were 3000 to be baptised, in the center of the city, any immersion baptism was impractical.

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KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon for "eis" as in "for the remission of sin" Definition

□ into, unto, to, towards, for, among

"For" (as used in Acts 2:38 "for the forgiveness...") could have two meanings. If you saw a poster saying "Jesse James wanted for robbery", "for" could mean Jesse is wanted so he can commit a

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robbery, or is wanted because he has committed a robbery. The later sense is the correct one. So too in this passage, the word "for" signifies an action in the past. Otherwise, it would violate the entire tenor of the NT teaching on salvation by grace and not by works.

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We are Baptized with water into Christ

Matthew 3:11 - I baptize you with water into repentance,

Matthew 28:19 - Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

Mark 1:4 - John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance into the forgiveness of sins.

Luke 3:3 - And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance into the forgiveness of sins.

Acts 2:38 - And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ into the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:16 - for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:5 - On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus

Romans 6:3 - Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

Romans 6:4 - We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

1 Corinthians 1:13 - Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized into the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 1:15 - so that no one may say that you were baptized into my name.

1 Corinthians 10:2 - and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

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1 Corinthians 12:13 - For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body...

Galatians 3:27 - For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Acts 8:12

"But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."

This proves that baptism is part of the salvation process but that it is also predicated on belief. There is nothing in this verse that should lead one to think otherwise. "Belief" in Christ/God includes His forgiveness once sins are confessed (Rom. 10:9-10; 14:11; Phil. 2:11; 1 Jn. 1:9)

Acts 8:15-17

"When they arrived, they prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit."

In this passage, baptism was not enough to imbue reception of the Holy Ghost. They were ritually baptized in the correct way with correct name. It was the Laying on of hands and praying that resulted in the reception of the Holy Spirit. Act 2:38 promises the gift of the spirit for repentance and baptism, but that is not the complete story. They are both insufficient, though they may be sufficient.

Acts 8:36-38

"As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is some water. Why shouldn't I be

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baptized?' And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him."

Again, while baptism is a part of the salvation process, it always follows belief. There is no discussion within the text that suggests that baptism is required for repentance or that baptism is the vehicle of regeneration. In fact, one gets the distinct impression that baptism, in this particular case, was proposed by the eunuch himself. Act 8:27 tells us that this eunuch had come to Jerusalem to worship. He was therefore familiar with the Jewish religion, if not actually a convert to it. If he were a convert, or if he were considering becoming one, he must have known of the Jewish practice of baptizing all converts to Judaism (which had been done for several centuries). The Jews used baptism as an initiation rite for Gentiles who were converted to Judaism, and in other religions as well.

Hence the eunuch would have been familiar with baptism even if Philip never mentioned baptism. Remember eunuch was reading from the book of Isaiah, when Philip joined him. He was meditating on all that he was reading about in Isaiah. He must have also just read Isaiah 52:15, which begins, *"So shall He sprinkle many nations."* The passage only mentions that he preached Christ to him, but this does not mean that after preaching Christ to him, he could not also have told him about baptism, and indeed about many other things that confirms and edify believers and make them grow into the likeness of Jesus.

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Moreover, since the use of the verb 'katabaino', or "descend, go down", is connected with the action of stopping the chariot (Acts 8:38), it does not necessarily suggest immersion in the water but rather stepping down off of the chariot and into the water. Indeed, the very fact that the verbs "went down" (8:38) and "came up" (8:39) are in the plural person argues against using this phrasing as evidence of full-immersion, for surely Philip did not fully-immense himself even as he dunked the Eunuch! Thus, while baptism by full-immersion is not utterly impossible in this narrative, baptism by infusion while standing or sitting in a shallow pool of water is far more likely given the context. This fits with the reference in Isaiah 52:15

Act 10: 47-48

"Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have. So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Here, it is obvious that individuals had already received regeneration—before baptism—for they had received the Holy Ghost. It is also true that regeneration cannot take place without repentance (Rom. 10:9-10). Hence, there is NO remission of sin in baptism, nor is it critical to salvation. Baptism followed the salvation.

Peter said that this group of people had received the Holy Spirit "just as we have." He acknowledged that these people were already saved. Just as truly as Peter and the Christians with him had received the Holy Spirit,

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so Cornelius and his friends had received the Holy Spirit. Having received the Holy Spirit was proof that they were already saved, as Romans 8:9-16 shows. Those who have received the Holy Spirit are the children of God. They are "born of the Spirit." They are "born again." They are guaranteed their inheritance (Romans 8:11; II Corinthians 1:22, 5:5; Ephesians 1:14). They are, in fact, saved. Cornelius and his friends were saved before Peter commanded them to be baptized.

Then why were they given baptism? To openly receive them into fellowship. It did nothing to them. They were already saved. Peter and all Jewish Christians could not say no to the evidence of the salvation that was demonstrated before them.

Acts 11:15-18

"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized by the Holy Spirit.' So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God."

Salvation is complete with faith in Jesus Christ. Holy Spirit is given to all those who are saved and ask for it. Baptism plays no part either in salvation or Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 16:30-33

"He then brought them out and asked, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.' Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of

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the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and his family were baptized."

Here is the clear answer to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?"

The answer is straight and clear, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." It is interesting that the salvation will spill over to the whole household. They can loose their salvation by rejecting Jesus. They are already saved.

Acts 19:1-6

"While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived a Ephesus. There he found some disciples and asked them, 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' They answered, 'No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.' So Paul asked them, 'Then what baptism did you receive?' 'John's baptism,' they replied. Paul said, 'John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus.' On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. There were about twelve men in all."

This passage sums up the entire argument: a). John the Baptist's baptism was inadequate and he baptized for "repentance," the remission of sin. b). Paul had to re-baptize these twelve men—in the name of Jesus—implying that it is only Jesus Who saves or remits sin. c). No human act or work can accomplish this feat and; d). Jesus supplanted John the Baptist's baptism.

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They were saved when they received Jesus (though it is not explicitly stated). Otherwise they would not get baptized in the name of Jesus. They did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit because of water baptism. It was as a result of laying on of hands.

Acts 22:16

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away calling on his name."

"And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away...." This verse could lend strong support for those taking the position that baptism "saves" or remits sin. But again, contextually, something is missing—the rest of the verse: "calling on his name."

When this is added to the phrase, it becomes obvious that it is not baptism, which saves or remits sin, but the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! "Washing away" is connected to "calling on his name". This is supported by original Greek text. The terms "arise" and "call" (anastaV and epikalesamenoV) are aorist participles; "be baptized" and "be cleansed" (baptisai and apolousai) are aorist imperatives. These terms form two sets--the first, "arise and be baptized," the second, "wash away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord," or more literally, "wash away your sins, *having* called upon the name of the Lord." Paul evidently did not associate baptism with salvation as we know very well that his gospel did not contain baptism even though Paul was chosen to be Christ's "witness to all men of what [he had] seen and heard." (Acts 22:15), he declares:

***Christ did not send me to baptize,
but to preach the gospel...
(1 Cor.14-17a)***

That gospel did not evidently contain baptism.

Rom. 3:27-28 - "Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law."

Rom. 4:1-3 - "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, discovered in this matter? If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. What does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.'"

Rom. 4:6 - "David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works."

Rom. 11:6 - "And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace."

Gal. 2:16 - "Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified."

Gal. 2:21 - "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Eph. 2:8-9 - "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

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2 Tim. 1:9 - "Who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time."

Heb. 6:1-2 - "Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment."

The Case of the Thief on the Cross.

Luk 23:39-43 One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." And he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." And he said to him, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Certainly he satisfied the Rom.10:9 conditions. *"because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Notice that the thief did confess his sins and knew pretty well that he deserved death because of his sins. What is surprising is the thief's belief in the resurrection of Jesus. If he knew anything that was that the Roman crucifixion is the end of life here. They never let any crucified to live. They made sure that every crucified person is dead before taking the body down. Yet the thief on the cross knew that Jesus is going

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to come back gloriously. That was indeed remarkable. He believed in his heart that God will raise Jesus from the dead and Jesus will come back in glory into His Kingdom.

Those completely fulfilled Rom. 10:9-10 conditions for salvation. On hearing this, Jesus' immediate statement *"Today, you will be with me in Paradise"* confirm Romans 10:9-10 as necessary and sufficient conditions for salvation. Rom 10:10 *"For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved"* Baptism does not enter into the equation.

Some people have suggested that the thief was actually baptized by John the Baptist. That is pushing the matter to the extreme. We don't know that. Even if he was he did evidently it did not bring the fruits of repentance. (*Mat 3:8 Bear fruit that befits repentance*). Evidently it is a lame excuse.

B. Baptism does not bring the anointing of the Holy Spirit

Was baptism the means of receiving the Holy Spirit?

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

On the occasion of Cornelius conversion this is what happened:

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Acts.10: 44 -47"While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word...for they heard them speaking in tongues and extolling God " Then Peter declared, "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

The obvious implication is that these people received the Holy spirit- the baptism from Jesus, who can now stop them from becoming members of the church of Jesus Christ? The only consistent condition for receiving the Holy spirit is that they hear the word. They were baptized because they heard the word and received Jesus and received the Holy Spirit. Here was a visible indication of God's impartiality. "Truly, I perceive that God shows no partiality..."

But in Samaria we have a different situation:

Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

Here baptism followed the preaching of the word. But they did not receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit until the apostles laid hand on them.

Acts 8:16 because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon any of them; they had simply been baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts.8: 18 Spirit was given through the laying on of Apostles hand.

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Here they were given the instructions in Jesus and then baptized. Then they received the Holy spirit. There is no order we can assign to the baptism of Holy spirit.

What is the conclusion? Is baptism a necessary or sufficient condition for receiving the Holy Spirit?

How do we understand this verse now?

Acts 2:38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Receiving of the Holy Spirit does not follow from baptism, but from believing Jesus.

Galatians were asked point blank this very question: "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal.3:2). The answer was obvious-God's gift of salvation was received the moment they heard the word of the Gospel and accepted its invitation. It was certainly not as a result of being baptized. So we come to the basic conclusion:

Baptism is neither necessary nor sufficient to be saved or to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

What does this salvation mean here? For personal salvation baptism is not necessary. But many people usually restrict the meaning of

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salvation. It is not limited by personal salvation. The final salvation is not individualistic but communal. Jesus will not come to take away individual believers. He comes to take his bride - the church. Salvation lies in being within the body of Christ. Baptism is that entry into the Church, which will be raptured away to be with Jesus. Individual believers do not form that church. A worshipping community, organically livened with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which shows forth the fruits of the spirit to the glory of God through good works, is the Church. It is ultimately this meaning that salvation through baptism implies

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A study of the verses showing how salvation is imparted.

	Verse	Condition yes/no	Not Condition
1	Lk 19:9 "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.	Son of Abraham	
2	Ac 4:12 And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."	In the name of Jesus	
3	Ro 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to every one who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, "He who through faith is righteous shall live.	Power of God and everyone who has faith	
4	Mt 10:22 But he who endures to the end will be saved Mt 24:13 Mark 13:13	Endures to the end	
5	Mt 19:25 "Who then can be saved?" ²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." ²⁷ Then Peter said in reply, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?" ²⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me Other Gospels also tell the same Mark 10:26	God Who followed Jesus	

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6	Mk 16:16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned	Believe and Baptized	
7	Lk 7:50nd he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."	Faith	
8	Lk 8:12 The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved.	Not believe = not saved	
9	Jn 3:17For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him	Through Jesus	
10	Jn 10:9 I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture	Those who enters through Jesus	
11	Ac 2:21And it shall be that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'	Whoever calls on the name of the Lord	
12	Ac 4:12 ¹² And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved	Name of Jesus	
13	Ac 11:14'Send to Joppa and bring Simon called Peter; ¹⁴ he will declare to you a message by which you will be saved, you and all your household.' ¹⁵ As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell on them just as on us at the beginning.	Message	
14	Ac 16:30"Men, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." ³ ...and he was baptized	Believe in the Lord Jesus	

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	at once, with all his family		
15	<p>Ro 5:9⁹ Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹</p>	<p># justified by his blood = saved by him from the wrath of God</p> <p># reconciled, shall we be saved by his life</p>	
16	<p>Ro 10:9 The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart (that is, the word of faith which we preach); ⁹ because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. ¹¹ The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and bestows his riches upon all who call upon him. ¹³ For, "every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved</p>	<p># confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.</p> <p># man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.</p> <p># No one who believes in him will be put to shame</p>	

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17	1 Cor 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.	Message of the cross	
18	1 Co 15:1-2 Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, ² by which you are saved, if you hold it fast—	Gospel (as preached by Paul) you received	
19	Eph 2:4-10 But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with him, and made us sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not because of works, lest any man should boast. ¹⁰ For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.	For by grace you have been saved through faith;	this is not your own doing,.
20	2 Th 2:13-14 God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel,	Sanctifying work of the spirit Through our gospel	
21	1 Ti 2:15 Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.	Through bearing children and continue in	

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		faith and love and holiness with modesty.	
22	2 Ti 1:8-9 But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace	Called us to holy life	Not because of anything we have done.
23	Titus 3:5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,	Washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.	Not because of righteous things we have done
24	Heb 10:39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved	believe	
25	1 Pe 3:20-21 In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience	Pledge of a good conscience	Not by the removal of dirt from the body = not by water baptism.

25 verses that gives us the way of salvation indicates that the condition for salvation is "faith in Jesus Christ and not by anything that we do" especially removal of dirt from the body. We may be baptized but it is not a necessary or sufficient condition for salvation. Whatsoever edifies us and make us grow into the likeness of Jesus we do. If baptism leads us

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to a recommitment and inspires fresh growth, by all means go for it. But if you are doing it because you want salvation, or you fear that without it you may miss salvation, you are grossly misled. Not only that, you have made the cross of Christ "of no value to you".

C. Taking Baptism is not obeying God

The often heard phrase from those who take a second baptism is that they are obeying Jesus. However look at the verse that we quote for that:

Mat 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..

The command to baptize was given to the disciples who were to go and preach the gospel to all creation. It was never given to the believer. The command was not to be baptized, but to baptize. The evangelist or the pastor who baptize people are obeying God. But those who receive baptism is not obeying God. At best they are giving the pastor a chance to obey God. The reason for this will be apparent only when we understand what baptism means viz. a process of making disciples. The command simply was to initiate the teaching process so that they may be taught. The phrase is "baptizing and making them disciples" or "make disciples,..... baptizing them". Otherwise we will be taking the teaching out of its context and making it into a ritual. It is this process of ritualizing that makes the rituals meaningless. Nay it ends up as a deterrent to real realization of Christ. Thus baptism can become an idol that we serve rather than a means of christian growth.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT IS WATER BAPTISM?

Then what is it?

1. Baptism as an initiation ceremony

Here baptism is an initiation into the family of the organized institution of the church. Evidently it was an initiation ceremony. Every religion had and still has their own initiatory rites, which is considered sacred, mystical and given to the elect only. Baptism was one like that. Such open confession was necessary during the period of persecution and Christian hunting to safeguard the members. This was the only way one could make sure of the truthfulness of the brethren.

What are some of the initiation ceremonies used by other religions? Graduation ceremony, puberty rites, marriage ceremony, burial ceremony and subsequent rites, club and secret society initiations, raging in college's etc are examples we are all familiar with.

Baptism is a naming ceremony, where an individual is given a new name and accepted within the community as an identity. In Baptism of

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the new converts, even today a new name is given. Bishops and kings are given a new name during their ordination.

In any society there are two types of ceremonies. A ritual is a patterned, repetitive, and symbolic enactment of a cultural belief or value; its primary purpose is alignment of the belief system of the individual with that of society.

1. The rites of initiation or rites of transition or rites of passages.

A rite of passage is a series of rituals that move individuals from one social state or status to another as, for example, from girlhood to womanhood, boyhood to manhood, or from the womb to the world of culture. Rites of passage transform both society's perception of individuals and individual's perceptions of themselves.

Examples of Rites of Passages include: Puberty, marriage, funeral, anunayanam, entering sanyasa, raaging, secret society initiations, and rotary installation, graduation etc.

It is a seal. A seal is only an affirmation of what is contained. The seal has meaning only if the document contains the matter after the fact. Otherwise, the seal is really void

2. The rites of intensification

This is an ongoing process whereby the belief systems are reinforced by rituals. Examples of this are: Prayer fellowship, worshiping together in church, saluting the flag every morning, picnics, club meetings. It is in

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coming together that motivation is established and the faith reaffirmed.

Those who miss the church regularly are often weak Christians.

Evidently baptism is a rite of initiation. This aspect is very important to remember. Baptism is not the end, but a beginning. If baptism was the end of the Christian growth or faith or sanctification then we will have to wait until it is accomplished. Then baptism becomes graduation ceremony. Unfortunately in Christian Growth we get our graduation only in heaven.

Some understanding in this can be obtained by looking at the Great Commission.

Matthew 28:19-20

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen

Mark 16:15-16

"⁵ And he said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. ¹⁶ He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

As I have mentioned earlier these two verses refers to the same event and same command as reported by two evangelists. One should image that both heard these commission together. The difference should be therefore only in the way they understood the order.

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Mathew understood it as: Disciple all nations how? Baptizing,
Teaching

Mark understood it as: Preach to whole creation. Baptize those who believe.

Baptism is equivalent to teaching and discipling. What Jesus is ordering is to go to all nations and tell about Jesus. Those who believe you, you make them disciples i.e. to teach them to observe all things. How could people believe the preacher? Mark 16:20 And they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it. Evidently the Lord referred here is the Holy Spirit. (Early Church considered Jesus and Holy Spirit as a unity)

Replace baptized by "become a disciple of Jesus" or "taught about Jesus" we get the actual meaning of the verse. If we look at all the conversions in the New Testament we see that all of them were baptized immediately on hearing the word of God, immediately, within the hour, right there.

This idea is inherent in the Jewish concept of ablutions - mikvah. Hebrew word for the mikvah the pool of immersion is the same word used for hope as in Jer. 14:8. It has the root "vue", which means "to wait for," or, "to have hope." So Jewish baptism indeed was an immersion in the hope of salvation. However the usual meaning of mikvah is "gathering" or "collecting." Mikvah is a collection or gathering of water

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for ritual washing. The meaning of mikvah is simply "gathered together". Waters also symbolizes nations. The essential meaning of Christian baptism is to gather together in Christ from all nations. This is the emphasis of the wording "baptized into Christ" and "Baptized in the name of " In this sense baptism is the gathering together of people from all nations into the body of Christ.

A Study of Conversion in the Book of Acts

1. The three thousand baptized on the first Pentecost
(Acts 2:38-41).
2. The baptisms that Philip performed in Samaria (Acts 8:12)
3. The baptism of Simon Magus (Acts 8:13)
4. The baptism of the Eunuch (Acts 8:36-38)
5. The baptism of the household of Cornelius
(Acts 10:47-48; recounted in Acts 11:14-18)
6. The baptism of Saul (Acts 9:18; recounted in Acts 22:16)
7. The baptism of Lydia and her household (Acts 16:13-15)
8. The baptism of the Philippian Jailer and his household
(Acts 16:33)
9. The baptism of Crispus, his household, and many Corinthians
(Acts 18:8; cf. 1 Cor. 1:14)
10. The baptism of twelve men at Ephesus (Acts 19:3-5)

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Scripture	Faith	Baptism	Discipled?
Acts 2:14-47 3000 at Jerusalem	when they heard...	Stated v. 38	⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.
Acts 8:9-13 Samaria	And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs which he did.. they believed Philip	Stated vv. 12,13	after being baptized he continued with Philip
Acts 8:26-39 Eunuch	beginning with this scripture he told him the good news of Jesus	Stated v. 38	Not known
Acts 9:1-19 Saul/paul	you will be told what you are to do.	Stated v. 18	ou will be told what you are to do."Gal 1:12 For several days he was with the disciples at Damascus.
Acts 10:1-11:18 Cornelius	he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ	Stated 10:48	Then they asked him to remain for some days.
Acts 16:13-15 Lydia	The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul	Stated v. 15	come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.
Acts 16:25-34 Jailer	they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house	baptized at once,	

In every case baptism took place within a day or in a few hours of preaching the gospels. It certainly could not have been a doctrinal

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treatment. They simply came to the knowledge of Jesus. They were immediately baptized. Then we see that the Preachers stayed with them and instructed them extensively and it continued without end. The Apostles made several journeys in and out and wrote letters and sent messengers to instruct further. So we see that Baptism was simply a process by which the baptizer took these people as their disciples. Most cases we are told that they were given extensive instructions. In the case of Paul, he went into the deserts of Arabia and was caught up into Paradise—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— and he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter. (2 Cor 12:4). The point is that baptism was an initiation into Christian life followed by extensive instruction into Christian living and never the other way round.

The commission of our Lord Jesus in Matthew 28: 19-20 commands us to make disciples by "baptizing and teaching." If we read this text chronologically, we would contend that teaching follows Baptism. But, it is not intended to be chronological. It is simply explaining how to make disciples. You make disciples by baptizing and teaching. The order is immaterial. Baptism does not bring salvation it is only an initiation into discipleship – an initiation into learning. It is a beginning and not an end. Actually that is how Gurus everywhere in the world made disciples. That is how John the Baptist and Jesus made disciples. (Jn 4:1 "Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John") In the Brahminic tradition the disciples were brought to the Guru by their family and

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presented their gifts (Dhakshina). Then they were initiated with the sacred thread (punu nool) and then they were given the first lessons. This sacred thread ceremony is the second birth of the Brahmin whereupon he is given the Brahma Jnana (Knowledge of Salvation) and he becomes Twice Born (Dwijan).

We see here the real confusion of what exactly is baptism. Is it an initiation into discipleship or a graduation after discipleship into full salvation? Is it an acknowledgement of their achievement? At what point do we give baptism then? We will have to delay the baptism till deathbed? People sometime say we should wait till the age of responsibility. What age is that? When is a man mature enough to make a decision? Any missionary will know that a person is to be baptized as soon as he acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus and is willing to learn further. In a way his salvation depends on this first step. Thus baptism leads to salvation, though salvation is not attained through the ritual of baptism.

As soon as the person (individually) or family (by the decision of the head of the family) or tribe (by the decision of the chief of the family) accept Jesus they are baptized collectively (baptizing the nation) and the church jointly teaches them into all truth. Those who believe and confess and do all things that Jesus commanded them to do will be saved.

This is the only possible explanation that is possible without conflict with other passages in the bible concerning salvation. Unless the ritual of

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baptism is understood as an initiation into the study of Jesus we are bound to produce heresies and hair splitting arguments such as:

Baptism Regenerates,

Baptism Saves,

Without Water Baptism there is no salvation,

Baptism must be in the name Jesus,

Baptism must be in the name of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit,

Baptism should be immersion,

Baptism should be sprinkling or pouring,

Baptism should be one immersion,

It should be three immersions,

Baptisee should be in standing position or sit down or lie down while being baptized,

Immersion should be in backward position,

It should be in forward position,

It should be after 18 years of age,

It should be as an infant etc.

When baptism is a sacrament, and if it is a ritual sufficient or at least necessary for salvation in the absolute literal sense, everything will become complicated.

2. Baptism was a counter

Baptism was used as a counter in the addition to the Church, the body of Christ. It was a way of weighing the body to see if the baby was

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growing properly or not. Later in Rome when people were lined up to be baptized to make them Christians, the body was growing flabby. When an unbeliever got baptized, the counter gave a wrong counting, but the sealing was a sealing of condemnation. The same concept is found in the communion. Communion is a blessing to those who receive it in faith, but a condemnation for those who partake of it unworthy

What does baptism do?

For the person who is baptized, it is an initiation into the church. If he is an adult or the head of a family or tribe or nation it is his confession of faith in Jesus Christ individually or collectively. For the outward world it is a declaration of his new identity as a member of the church and declares their allegiance to Jesus. If we look at the history of Islam, Islam did use the national conversion method. Their baptism was the declaration starting "la ilah". This will require a change in relationships with his friends, family and community as a whole. When a man leaves his evil ways and finds salvation, this is the way he tells his old companions that he is no more the same old man. He thereby comes into new relations within the church - the family of God. It protects the infant (irrespective of how old he is) by being in the family and provides an environment to grow. It is also compared to clothing, which protects from heat and cold.

Why do we have big marriage ceremony? There is an announcement, and a ceremony in the midst of the community and a celebration. All

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these are necessary to make sure that a new relationship has been established between the boy and the girl and they are not available for others. A new relationship is established between other girls and boys. Baptism also does the same. It is important and necessary. It has nothing to do with salvation, but everything to do with growing in maturity in faith.

Then the mode of this ceremony and the occurrence (whether it should be public or private or concealed) depends on the communal situation. If a public announcement destroys the person should we refrain from such public display? When the early church was an underground church, baptism was conducted underground among the believing community. Sometimes an open baptism becomes a powerful witnessing in situation. We can hardly place a hard and fast rule regarding, when, where, how of the ceremony.

3. Baptism is a sign and seal of the new covenant.

Before we go into the details let us first understand what is a covenant:

Webster's New World Dictionary defines a "Covenant" or "Testament" as follows. "A binding and solemn agreement to do or keep from doing a specified thing; compact, a will, or an agreement made by or between two or more parties; orig., a covenant, esp. one between God and man; a statement, act, etc. testifying to the fact, validity, or worth of something; testimonial (©1995 Zane Publishing, Inc. ©1994, 1991, 1988 Simon & Schuster, Inc.)"

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A Biblical Covenant is a contract or a promise by God with people. There are actually two major covenants. (In fact when God deals with an individual or a family or a community he makes a covenant with them). The Old Covenant given in Old Testament and the New Covenant given in the New Testament. Even though the covenant is new, both the Old and the new covenants are essentially same.

The mediator is the same: Jesus

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

Acts 10:43 All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

1Tim. 2:5-6 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men -- the testimony given in its proper time.

At the time of Mosaic covenant, Jesus himself was present.

Exod. 24:9-11 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

The condition is the same- faith

Gen. 15:6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Rom. 4:3 What does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

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In both cases there were seals and signs of the covenant.

What are some of the seals of the covenants?

In Abrahamic covenant the seal was through a sacrifice by God walking between the pieces of the sacrifice (Gen 15:17-21). In Abraham's case the election was passed on to Abraham through the Priest of the Most High, Melchizedek in a communion ceremony (Ex. 13:18) In the Mosaic covenant we read:

Exod. 24:8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

In both these events it was sealed with animal sacrifice and sprinkling of blood. The element was blood and was sprinkled. This was a historical one event.

What is this seal in the new covenant?

Hebr. 9:19 -12:24 When Moses had proclaimed every commandment of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. ...Hebr. 9:21 In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. ...Hebr. 10:22 let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. . Hebr. 12:24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

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In the Old Covenant it was followed by a feast where the elders took part in the presence of Yvh (Ex 24:9-11), "leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank. "In the new covenant breaking of the bread and the partaking of the Lord's Table.

The sign of the old covenant both Abrahamic and Mosaic were circumcision.

Gen. 17:9-13 Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between you and me.

For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner --those who are not your offspring. Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant.

Notice here several facts:

1. Though Abraham was the second party in the covenant, the covenant was with him and with his descendants. It was a communal act. It was not only Abraham, but also the entire tribe including those born in the household and slaves bought with money, irrespective of their faith. It was to be done in anticipation of God's promise of salvation.

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2. It was an external surgery and did not change his state. Yet he became eligible to the blessings of the covenant. He did not get the blessing unless; other basic requirements are met.

3. Yet it was not an open sign. Unless he was disrobed no one could know it. It was personal.

Thus baptism is the sign of the New Covenant just as circumcision was the sign and seal of the Abrahamic covenant. A seal does not provide the validity of the document. It attests to the origin or the person who make the document. It is so with baptism. Baptism does not save; it is God who saves. The seal declares the ownership. We shall see later that Paul actually call baptism, the spiritual circumcision.

Circumcision was the sign of the Jewish origin. It declared the owner as Yahweh.

What does baptism do? It declares that Jesus is the owner.

Baptism is the sign and not the substance of salvation. James says: If a man says he has faith, and has not works, can faith save him? The important word here is "say". There must be more than a profession. There must be reality in the soul. A person that fully trusts Christ has the blessed assurance of salvation (Heb. 11:1). Confessing Christ is the ongoing results and not the means of salvation. If Roman 10:9-10 is right, baptism has no role in salvation. It is the confession with tongue that matters. Declare your faith in words boldly. When the heart is filled, the mouth will speak and works will follow.

Lev. 14. The purpose? As a Proof to the People. If there is a parallel here, let us understand it.

4. For a Proof to the People

Conversion is always a matter of the heart, which is the reality. But it is proved to the people only when it is expressed in action. The function of baptism is just that. It is a proof to the people. Jesus while he was with us asked people to go through the mikvah and other Mosaic rituals just for that purpose. All through Old Testament Leprosy was considered an analogy of sin. When Jesus healed lepers he instructed them, "Go show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to the people" (Mat. 8:2-4; Mark 1:40-44; Luke 5:12-14) (People included even the priests). This included the elaborate ritual baptisms prescribed by Moses

THE MEANING OF BAPTISM

The World Council of Churches has summarized what we have been discussing so far as follows:

Baptism is the sign of new life through Jesus Christ. It unites the one baptized with Christ and with his people.

Baptism is participation in Christ's death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12);

Baptism is a washing away of sin (1 Cor. 6:11);

Baptism is a new birth (John 3:5); an enlightenment by Christ (Eph. 5:14);

Baptism is a reclothing in Christ (Gal. 3:27);

Baptism is a renewal by the Spirit (Titus 3:5);

Baptism is the experience of salvation from the flood (1 Peter 3:20-21);

Baptism is an exodus from bondage (1 Cor. 10:1-2) and

Baptism is a liberation into a new humanity in which barriers of division whether of sex or race or social status are transcended

(Gal. 3:27-28; 1 Cor. 12:13).

The images are many but the reality is one.

(World Council of Churches Faith and Order Paper No. 111

<http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/faith/bem3.html>)

Thus while the true baptism save, the sign does not save because it is only an image. Idols and images have no salvific power.

CHAPTER FIVE

BAPTISMAL GRACE

What is the merit of baptism?

Evidently baptism is an act in the material world. Has it got any spiritual significance? Does it do any spiritual regeneration? This is what is commonly termed as baptismal grace. Does the act of baptism confer any spiritual merit or grace beyond the symbolic declaration of faith and consequential strengthening of faith? Evidently any open declaration and confession of faith produces strengthening of faith. This is why we have witnessing sessions as part of fellowship. Has baptism any magic power? Yes, says both the Roman Catholics and Cults including legalistic Pentecostals.

Roman Catholic Church teaches that baptism is a work of merit, i.e., the act itself merits salvation whether any faith exists behind the act or not. The official Catholic approach is that baptism need not be an act of faith at all and an unbeliever who so desires may be validly baptized even though he have no faith provided the proper formula and mode are

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employed and the recipient need not even be conscious when he is baptized. Baptize any person unconscious and dying it will lead to salvation. A miscarried fetus or embryo, no matter how small, must always be baptized - absolutely if certainly alive, conditionally if doubtfully alive. The general rule is, of course, that a child should not be baptized until fully born. But if there is a danger that the child will die of suffocation, or from some other cause before complete delivery, it should be baptized on the first available members. All these legalism arise from the concept of the miraculous power of the baptismal ceremony for salvation. Original Sin that every man inherits from Adam is washed away by Baptism. The people who stand behind the regenerative power of baptism demands baptism as a prelude to entry into the Kingdom.

But there are several Pentecostal churches that teach the same thing. They also argue that baptism is necessary for salvation though unlike the Catholics they will agree that it not sufficient. What we are concerned here is whether it is necessary or not. It is necessary if it has some merit by which it washes away the sins. The usual approach is "Jesus said so, therefore it is necessary" is again being as legalistic as the Catholic Church. We have actually seen that Jesus did not say that. We cannot accept this unless we attribute some magic powers for the ritual. Clearly a ritual act of baptism on a non-believer does nothing to him. (The same group will disregard the sacramental grace and the Trans-substantiation of the Bread and Wine even though Jesus said, "This is my body", and "This is my blood" when it was instituted.). We take bath almost everyday. Those who live near a river or having a swimming pool in

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their backyard take bath by immersion. All Namboothirees have this bath ritual as part of their everyday life. They do not save them. What makes baptism different? Is it the magical words "In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit"? That is the declaration of the Roman Catholic Church. Is there magical spiritual power in those chants? The Hindus believe that chants properly administered will force God to comply. (There are many adepts who consider God as a person and therefore will certainly object to this hard and fast statement) This is because the Hindu god is really a force and not a person. God then is under a law and is forced to act in a given way. Are we moving towards that?

Yet every ritual and sacrament has a grace - not because of any magical relation between the rite and the benefits but because every symbol produce a change; every physical act has its effect in the spiritual realm - a mental and spiritual personal effect and a social effect. We are coming to realize how important the spoken words are, and the atmosphere and aroma and music etc are. What makes the difference? Thus given the right communication channels from the flesh to the spirit; through these varying dimensions it can lead to grace and to greater faith and even salvation. In the believer's baptism, the faith of the person is confirmed and enhanced to produce a change. It is equivalent to a confession and prayer by the one being baptized. In the case of the infants the prayers of the parents are answered. If prayers of the believer have any effect, the infant baptism will result in a grace and materialization of the requested regeneration. This is what happens in the child baptism especially. It can also lead to spiritual rebellion, condemnation and damnation in both

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cases. In the liturgy of St. James in the Holy Communion it says, "The Holy body and the Holy Blood of which we now partake, may it not be for our condemnation, but for our everlasting life." The same is true for Baptism. It can also lead to condemnation if the salvation offered is rejected or to everlasting life if it is accepted.

The ritual of baptism has meaning only in terms of the message it conveys to the baptized and to the rest of the people. It is an image. But the risk of the image becoming an idol will always be inherent. That is what happened to the early church group, who ascribed it the power to clear of the sins inherited from Adam. That is what is happening to the present day immersion baptism evangelical groups, when it ascribes power to clear off sins and to save. The image which did so much good, has become an idol. We have become idol worshippers. This was the very thing Paul was fighting against. We have simply replaced Baptism in the place of circumcision and are fighting over it.

CHAPTER SIX

IN SEARCH OF

SCRIPTURAL MODE OF BAPTISM

Various churches employ various modes of baptism. These include:

Immersion, sprinkling, covering, calling under the flag. It is decided by the meaning and importance that each church attaches to the symbolism. In this article I pursue the matter to find the scripturally correct baptism, if it exist.

Water was used in the church through the ages for baptism. This is carrying the Jewish tradition. Jews sprinkled and immersed for purification.

Mikvah of Jews

The *mikvah* must meet six special requirements as described in Oral Torah written down during the third to fifth centuries A.D. There are several strains of traditions. But Mikvah requirements seem to be the same in all.

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1. No other liquid but water may be used in the Mikvah, no coloring or chemicals, etc.
2. The Mikvah must be built into the ground, or be a part of a building attached to the ground. It cannot consist of any vessel that can be disconnected and carried away, such as a tub, vat, or barrel.
3. The water of a Mikvah cannot be running or flowing. The only exception to this rule is a natural spring, or a river whose water is derived mainly from springs.
4. The water of the Mikvah is brought together by natural means not drawn.
5. The water cannot be channeled to the Mikvah through anything that can become *tomeh*/unclean, such as pipes or channels made of metal, clay, or wood.
6. The Mikvah must contain no less than 40 *Sa'ah* of water, which is approximately 150 to 200 gallons.

Even when immersion was used it was never done by another. The person immersed themselves before at least three male witnesses.

The third century Judaism prescribed it as follows: " The person being immersed went into the water by himself, stretching out his arms, flexing his fingers, fluttering his eyelids he squats down into the water until he is completely covered by water. Flexing the fingers and toes, fluttering the eyelids was to insure that the water touched every part of the body. Normally a person would do this three times. The witness was the person

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that stood out of the water to make sure that the immersing person was completely covered by the water. " Whether this was the method at the time of Jesus cannot be ascertained.

The Brahminic method is as follows: "Step into the water halfway (abdomen level), pray looking towards north or east and dip the whole body under water once, rub the entire body clean with the palms and dip again twice."

However the baptism of John was not a proselysation but a ritual signifying repentance and return of a people who were already within the covenant. Scholars think that John and Jesus were both associated somehow with the Qmran Community of Essenes. John's baptism was therefore most probably a "pledge of allegiance and good conscience towards God". They were entering into a more holy life. Such baptisms were made standing erect. It was more of an anointing than ritual purification. In the same way Christian baptism is probably anointing someone into Royal Priesthood. It is assumed that they are already believers and are in the Kingdom. The mode of John's baptism and Baptism given by disciples and of the Christian baptism were the same. Since John and Jesus were connected with Essence Groups their Baptism was somehow connected to the expected "Righteous One".. There is a group of followers of John still in existence in Iran and Iraq who baptize in this manner. (A video of baptism by this group can be seen in the video series Legacy published by the Maryland and Public Television

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and central Independent Television program Iraq: "The cradle of civilization" is distributed by Ambrose Video Publishing. Inc., 1290 Avenue of the Americas, Suite 2245, New York NY 10104 This is an educational video produced by the secular organization). If the Mandeian Baptism is in any way a correct tradition of the Johannine baptism it was not by total immersion. The person goes into the water to his or her waist and the baptizer takes water with hand or with a small pitcher and pours it over the head. Probably this was handed over through generations, from John Historically therefore John's baptism was not by total immersion. It was a ceremonial washing. If we notice the ceremonial washing of Hindu Sanyasins (Holy Men – Ascetics) today in the river (Ganges), they follow a very similar procedure as part of ritual ablution.

It is also possible that there was a discontinuity in the baptismal procedures of John, Judaistic Proselysation and ritual purification proceedings with the Christian baptism after the resurrection of Jesus. Now baptism was into Christ and the procedures could have been changed accordingly. This is particularly true if Jesus did indeed instruct the Apostles as to the new form of baptism. Though we do not have any records for it, it is a possibility. I believe that the Johannine baptism prophetically foreshadowed the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The Essene prophetic tradition had this strong component in place long before even John.

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This painting by Leonardo De Vinci represents the Baptism as performed by John correctly and therefore is probably the early Christian form of baptism.

Old Testament method of Ritual Baptism

We have talked about the various baptisms, which the author of the Hebrews refers to. The mode of those baptisms is essentially one – dip and sprinkle. The medium was water, oil or blood. The water is indicative of washing and regeneration, oil that of anointing with Holy Spirit and Blood of covering and protection. All these are the essentials of New Testament Baptism too.

Rev. Robert C. Harbach in his study on “The Biblical Mode of Baptism” gives the following arguments for “dipping and sprinkling” as the true mode of baptism.

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Exo 12:22 Take a sprig of hyssop, dip it in the bowl containing the animal's blood, and wipe the blood on the doorposts and the beam above the door of your house. Not one of you is to leave the house until morning.

Here the dipping of hyssop and wiping on the doorpost and the beam covers the whole house with blood of protection. Heb 11:28 translate it as sprinkling.

Moses sprinkled blood on the altar; on the book; and on the people. He also *anointed the head* of Aaron with oil; *poured* blood on the altar; and *sprinkled* both oil and blood upon the priests. The priests were to *pour out* regular drink offerings. They were to *sprinkle* blood upon God's altar -- and upon all the objects in the sanctuary. They were to *pour* oil *upon* the sacrifices -- and to *pour out* the leftover ashes. They were also to *sprinkle* healed lepers with blood and with oil -- and to *sprinkle* the houses of those lepers, with blood.

Here the sacred objects were baptized with pouring and sprinkling. The mass baptism was done by sprinkling of blood. Why should the New Covenant be any different?

Fingers or hyssop were used for this purpose. Instead of sprinkling sometimes pouring or smearing was used - over the head, lobes of ears, on furniture, tools and other objects. When any dipping is mentioned, it is not of the person or thing being baptized, but an act performed by the baptizer to administer his baptism.

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Num 19:18 In the first case, someone who is ritually clean is to take a sprig of hyssop, dip it in the water, and sprinkle the tent, everything in it, and the people who were there. In the second case, someone who is ritually clean is to sprinkle the water on those who had touched the human bone or the dead body or the grave.

In this chapter 19 alone the essential actions are repeated: "sprinkle" (6 times), "wash" (5 times), "purify" (4 times), and "be clean"

Thus Harbach concludes that: "As many as ten pentateuchal passages show these baptisms to be cases of "this the dipping in and sprinkling with water. ..." The administration of baptism is neither either/or, that is, either by dipping in, or sprinkling with water, or a matter of both/and, that is both by dipping and sprinkling. There are neither two allowable modes of baptism, nor did the dipping happen to the baptized. So that the act of dipping was not the act of baptism, but the act of sprinkling was. Old covenant baptisms were performed by anointing with blood, and by the pouring of oil on the head. Baptism was also effected when men did ceremonially wash, bathe, purify and cleanse." The Biblical Mode of Baptism Rev. Robert C. Harbach

In terms of the Old Testament the biblical weight of evidence is heavy for "the dipping in *and* sprinkling with water."

Baptism in Prophecy

Prophets spoke about the baptism of the Holy Spirit in terms of pouring out and sprinkling

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*Pro 1:23 Turn back at my reproof, lo, I **pour forth** to you my spirit, I make known my words with you.*

*Isa 32:15 Till **emptied out** on us is the Spirit from on high, And a wilderness hath become a fruitful field, And the fruitful field for a forest is reckoned.*

*Isa 44:3 For I **pour waters** on a thirsty one, And floods on a dry land, I **pour My Spirit on thy seed**, And My blessing on thine offspring.*

*Isa 45:8 **Drop, ye heavens, from above**, And clouds do cause righteousness to flow, Earth openeth, and they are fruitful, Salvation and righteousness spring up together, I, Jehovah, have prepared it.*

*Isa 52:15 **So doth he sprinkle many nations**. Concerning him kings shut their mouth, For that which was not recounted to them they have seen, And that which they had not heard they have understood!*

This was fulfilled in the execution of His great commission, "Go ye, disciple the nations, baptizing them and teaching them..."

Again Ezekiel says regarding the New Covenant Baptism:

*Eze 36:25 And I **have sprinkled over you clean water**, And ye have been clean; From all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols, I do cleanse you.*

Eze 36:26 And I have given to you a new heart, And a new spirit I give in your midst, And I have turned aside the heart of stone out of your flesh, And I have given to you a heart of flesh.

Eze 36:27 And My Spirit I give in your midst, And I have done this, so that in My statutes ye walk, And My judgments ye keep, and have done them.

Eze 36:28 And ye have dwelt in the land that I have given to your fathers, And ye have been to Me for a people, And I--I am to you for God.

*Eze 39:29 And I hide not any more My face from them, In that I **have poured out My spirit** on the house of Israel, An affirmation of the Lord Jehovah!"*

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*Joe 2:16 Gather the people, sanctify an assembly, Assemble the aged, **Gather infants and sucklings of the breasts**, Go out let a bridegroom from his inner chamber, And a bride out of her closet.*

*Joe 2:23 And ye sons of Zion, joy and rejoice, In Jehovah your God, For He hath given to you the Teacher for righteousness, And causeth to **come down to you a shower, Sprinkling and gathered--in the beginning.***

*Joe 2:28 And it hath come to pass afterwards, **I do pour out My Spirit** on all flesh, And prophesied have your sons and your daughters, Your old men do dream dreams, Your young men do see visions.*

*Joe 2:29 And also on the men-servants, and on the maid-servants, In those days **I do pour out My Spirit.***

This promised baptism of the Spirit included not only "the people, congregation, elders, priests and ministers, but the children, those that suck the breasts," so that they all, including the infant seed of the congregation, were "Thine heritage." To them the promise was, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh," including sons and daughters. "In those days will I pour out My Spirit"

Zech. 12:10. "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace ..."

All these prophecies are direct prophecies concerning the coming of the believing seed of Abraham, viz. Christians. Not one of these has any direct reference to immersion leave alone total immersion. Total immersion concept was unknown to the Prophets. Predominant method of baptism for the prophets were "pouring and sprinkling"

Thus "Baptism was always by sprinkling or pouring. The "various baptisms" of the old covenant were always done *with* water, not

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immersed in water; the water being sprinkled on or poured over the body, and never the body plunged into water.” Rev. Prof. Dr. Francis Nigel Lee

A study of the Baptismal Fonts

A study of the baptismal fonts found around Christian churches could give us an understanding of the nature of baptism rendered to the believers of those periods. A study of these indicates clearly that the Christian initiation is never considered as an immersion process.

In the Apostolic Age, as in Jewish times (John, 3, 23), baptism was administered without special fonts, at the seaside or in streams or pools of water (Acts, 8: 38). It appears that baptism was performed preferably in running waters. These were called the living waters. Because they are continually renewed, they represented more aptly the renewing of the person continually by the Holy Spirit. Tertullian (AD160–230?). refers to St. Peter's baptizing in the Tiber (De bapt., 4); St. Paulinus (625–644 AD). in England by Bede (Hist. Eccl., II, 14-16) refers to baptism in rivers. Indoor baptism, however, was also practiced in the early church as seen in the Acts of Apostles. (Acts, 9:18; 16: 33)

As the church took institutional form, Baptismal fonts became part of the Christian Churches around the world.

An early Christian baptistery was found in a church in Jesus' hometown of Nazareth, This baptistery, which dates from the early second century, was too small and narrow to immerse a person in.

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In the East it took the form of a pool or cistern, called *kalymbethra* (swimming-bath). These were mostly knee deep, deep enough to provide baptism by immersion but most suitable for John type baptism by pouring.

In the west similar fonts were found. They are known by the Latin name of *natatorium*, and also as *piscina* with its allusion to birth and life in the waters (Tertullian, De bapt., 1 St. Augustine, De schis. Donat., III, 2). The name *fons* was also used which meant spring, alluding to the "springs of living waters out of the belly" of the believer. The oldest western fonts that are excavated are found in the Roman catacombs. These are remains of the earliest churches who because of persecution lived their religious life underground. These cisterns are hewn from the stones in the floor. Examples are to be found

in the Ostrian Cemetery, where in a small shallow basin in the floor a spring wells up in the Cemetery of Pontianus, where an oblong reservoir about eighteen square feet in surface area and three feet in depth, (still filled with water) is found. (Marucchi, Archéologie Chrétienne, II, 63);

in St. Felicitas ((Marucchi, Archéologie Chrétienne, II 304); and

in St. Priscilla, (Marucchi in Nuovo Bullettino, 1901, 73).

In every case the baptismal fonts were shallow pools where only the candidate's feet were immersed. These were certainly unsuitable for total

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immersion as is practiced today. Even in the squatting mode immersion could not be accomplished. Water was certainly poured on people from an overhead stream or from a pitcher held by the person baptizing.

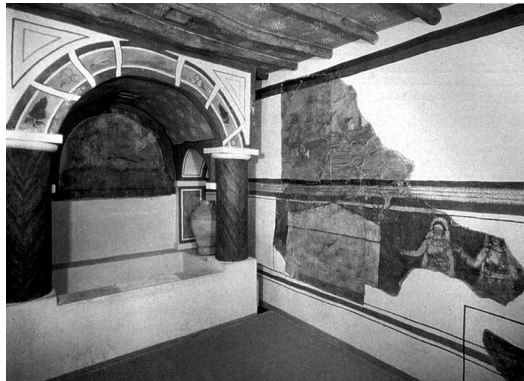
It is therefore almost certain on the basis of extensive archeological studies that this indeed was the mode of baptism employed by the early Christians. (de Rossi, *Bullettino di Archeol.*, 1876, 8-15; Duchesne, *Les Eglises séparées*, Paris, 1905, 89-96).

As the churches began to incorporate baptisteries within the church they followed similar structures. But with additional significance attached to the steps. These pools were built at lowered and built in rectangular (the tomb of Christ, the four corners of the earth, the four Gospels or the tetragram of Jahweh), hexagonal or octagonal (the eighth day - that of New Beginnings, the General Judgment, Final Resurrection and Salvation) forms. In the East they took the shape of cross (the death of the Redeemer alluding to the neophyte's death to sin) with steps leading into it. The candidates will walk down into the pool and came up out of it into the assembly. The number of steps were also given mystical symbolisms (Isidore of Seville, *De divin. off.*, II: 25 Gregory of Tours, *Mirac.*, I: 24). In few cases they were shaped in the form of a coffin giving allusion to Paul's reference in Romans, 6: 4. Their average depth of less than three feet indicate that baptism by total immersion was practically unknown during the early church period. If some form of immersion was practiced, it was just dipping the head or immersion and not submersion.

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See Catholic Encyclopedia: www.newadvent.org/cathen/02274a.htm for additional details

Only from the fourth century, after Constantine declared freedom for Christian worship, can we document the birth and development throughout the Roman Empire of buildings planned and constructed specifically for the rite of Baptism. The following are of fourth century origin.



The baptistery in the Christian Church at Dura-Europos in Syria, 240 AD. The city was captured by the Romans in 165 A.D. It was abandoned after a Sassanian siege in 256-257. After it was abandoned, it was covered by sand and mud and disappeared from sight. The architecture of the font is similar to that of a tomb



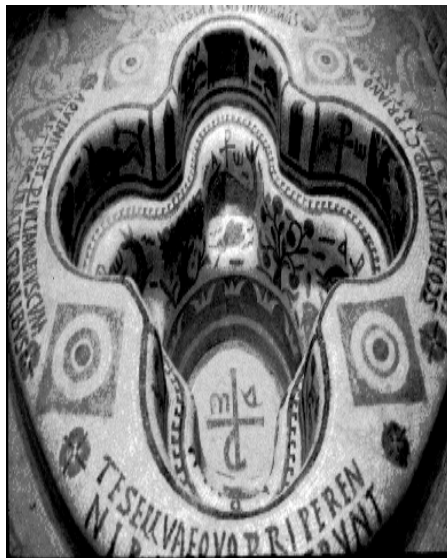
The Baptistry of Basilica at Hippo Regius. Saint Augustine was its bishop from A.D. 396 to 430. The baptistry itself is quite small.



The Baptistry at Bulla Regia , Tunisia



The Baptistery at Sbeitla in Tunisia



The Baptistery from Kelibia in Tunisia

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Baptistry in Milan, Church of Sancta Thecla

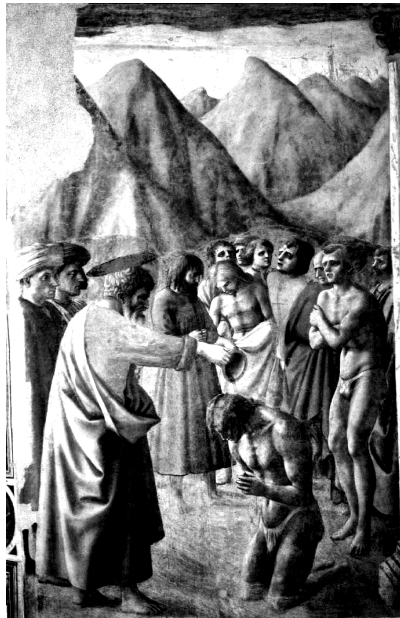
This is the baptistry in which Ambrose baptized Augustine.



A modern baptistry used in episcopal churches

Art and Literature

This conclusion is supported by the early art and literature. Many of the **earliest Christian artworks** depicted baptism--but never baptism by immersion! If the recipient of the sacrament is in a river, he is always shown standing ankle deep while water is poured over his head from a cup or shell, which was the normal practice of baptism of the early Christians.



Cappella Brancacci, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence 1426

Tile mosaics in ancient churches, paintings in the catacombs, designs on ordinary household objects like cups and spoons, engravings on marble--

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it is always baptism by pouring. Baptisteries in early cemeteries are clear witnesses to baptisms by infusion. No, the entire record of the early Church--as shown in the New Testament, in other writings, and in monumental evidence--indicates the mode of baptism was not restricted to immersion. In the early periods of persecution, baptisms were not done in the open and was a secret ritual within the community of believers. Hence the elaborate 'shouting from the mountain top performance' were rare. Other archaeological evidence confirms the same thing.



This painting found in the Catacombs of St. Callixtus in Rome is probably the oldest painting ever known in Christian History

Here are some of the early third and fourth century art.

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In all these cases the baptizee is not an adult but a child of educable age. Thus the baptism was indeed a discipling initiation process. The position does not seem to indicate a submersion process. In all the cases the right hand of the baptizer rests on the head of the baptizee. Some have suggested that it is a position for pushing the person down into the water, which evidently is not a viable explanation as any one can see, since it would mean pushing the person down into the water vertically down pushing from the head. But the baptizee is standing in water at knee deep ankle deep or waist deep, which does not permit any submersion. The only way water can cover the head is by pouring or sprinkling. In some pictures water is being filled into the jars. It is evident that immersion (if it was part of the ritual) was not the important feature of baptism at all since it was never depicted.

Gregory of Nyssa, in *On the Baptism of Christ* speaks thus:

“We in receiving baptism, in imitation of our Lord . . . are not indeed buried in the earth, . . . but coming to the element akin to earth, to water, we conceal ourselves in that as the Savior did in the earth” He then goes on to speak of baptism as “laid and hidden” in the earth as the process of “poured over with water three times” John Chrysostom on the other hand speaks of the process as the process where baptizer “puts your head down into the water three times and three times he lifts it up again” (*Baptismal Instructions* 2.26).

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Documentary Evidence

THE DIDACHE
or
THE TEACHING OF THE LORD TO THE GENTILES BY THE
TWELVE APOSTLES

7:1 But concerning baptism, thus baptize ye: having first recited all these precepts, baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in running water;

7:2 but if thou hast not running water, baptize in some other water, and if thou canst not baptize in cold, in warm water;

7:3 but if thou hast neither, pour water three times on the head, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

7:4 But before the baptism, let him who baptizeth and him who is baptized fast previously, and any others who may be able. And thou shalt command him who is baptized to fast one or two days before.

Didache is dated c. 60-100 AD

"The Didache is probably the oldest surviving extant piece of Christian literature which did not make it into the canon. It is a handbook of sorts for new Christian converts, packed with instructions derived directly from the teachings of Jesus. There are three sections --- the first six chapters are catechetical lessons; the next four give descriptions of the liturgy, including baptism, fasting and communion; and the last six outline the church organization.

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The Didache claims to have been authored by the twelve apostles. Some believe this, others say it might be the result of the first Apostolic Council, about. 50AD -- the one recorded in Acts 15. There are similarities to the Apostolic Decree and the church structure is primitive and the description of the Eucharist carefully avoids mention of the *body and blood of Christ*. Most scholars agree that the work, in its earliest form, may have circulated as early as the 60's AD though additions and modifications may have taken place well into the third century. The work was never officially rejected by the Church, but was excluded from the canon.

The complete text of the Didache was discovered in the *Codex Hierosolymitanus*, though a number of fragments exist, most notably in the Oxyrhynchus Papyri. It was originally composed in Greek, probably within a small community. " (Indiana Wesleyan University)

Evidently this represents the custom of the early Christian Church. Didache clearly indicates that other baptismal modes were in existence right from the beginning of the church, the testimony of the Didache is seconded by other early Christian writings.

Hippolytus of Rome said,

"If water is scarce, whether as a constant condition or on occasion, then use whatever water is available"

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Cyprian maintained that no one should be "disturbed because the sick are poured upon or sprinkled when they receive the Lord's grace" (Letter to a Certain Magnus, 69:12 [A.D. 255]). Sprinkling was allowed when the normal baptism process cannot be done.

Symbolism

In the various symbols of baptism we notice that **water never actually covered the baptisee**. Total immersion is not the meaning of the symbol at all.

Paul was baptized in a house (Acts 9:17-18). In fact, **he was baptized standing up**. When Ananias came to baptize him, he said: "And now why do you wait? Rise [literally, "stand up"] and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). Or did they go out to a pool? We have no definite statement. The verse imply otherwise.

Peter performed baptisms in the **house of Cornelius** (Acts 10:47-48), even though bathtubs and swimming pools weren't fixtures of ancient homes. After the earthquake that released him from prison, Paul baptized his jailer and his entire family--within the jailor's house (Acts 16:32-33) (The story indicates that Paul refused to leave the jail premises until the authorities came and took him out).

On the occasion of Peter's first sermon, three thousand people were baptized in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41), yet archaeologists have demonstrated there was no sufficient supply of water for these baptisms to be

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performed by immersion unless they were led to the river Jordan several miles away. Even if there were enough water it would have been **physically impossible** to perform the job by the apostles alone unless the recipients did it by themselves.

There are other practical reasons why **immersion is not always possible and acceptable**. What about the bedridden and dying? They can't be immersed in water, so is baptism to be denied them? What about desert nomads and the Eskimos? Are they to be denied the sacrament because baptism by immersion is nearly impossible for them?

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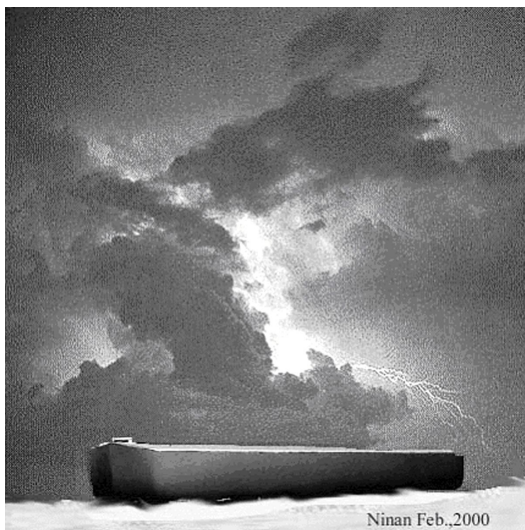
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The Ark, The Sea and the Cloud

The three essential symbolism of baptism referred to in the Bible speaks against the practice of total immersion in symbolism.

1. Ark of Noah

1Pet. 3:20-21 who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also --not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



In this symbolism, the ark was floating in water, never covered. No water fell on those who were inside. Those, on whom water fell, perished, not saved.

2. The red sea



3. The cloud

1Cor. 10:1-5 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert.

In both these cases neither the sea nor the cloud covered the Israelites who were saved from Pharaoh. Pharaoh and his army were immersed and they perished. Though they were all saved by grace, their bodies were scattered in the desert. Baptism did not do them any good. Yet Israel was saved through water and not by water in the historical context

What is the correct symbolization of being baptized with the Holy Spirit?

Baptism is a symbol of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is always spoken of as being poured down, descend, being filled and anointed. It is never spoken of as immersed into. In describing the falling of the Holy Spirit on the apostles on Pentecost, three times that baptism is referred to as a pouring out of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16-19, 33). In fact, it was "distributed and resting on each one of them" (2:3). Its falling in such a dispersed manner looks more like sprinkling or aspersion than immersion! In other references, the falling, pouring out, and receiving of the Holy Spirit are all related to the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44-47; 11:15f; Titus 3:5). The giving of the Spirit, which enabled

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disciples to know the truth, was called an anointing rather than a burial (1 John 2:20, 26; John 14:26). The pouring out of the Spirit spoken of by Joel was identified by Peter as the outpouring, falling, or baptism (Joel 2:28; Acts 10:44; 11:15-17).

Rabbi Akiva says in Mishna:: "Happy are you, Israel. Before whom do you purify yourselves? Who purifies you? Your Father in heaven! It is thus written (Ezekiel 36:25), 'I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you shall be clean.' And it is written n (Jeremiah 14:8), 'God (HaShem) is Israel's Mikvah.' Just as the Mikvah purifies the unclean, so God purifies Israel.'" (Mishnah, Yoma 8:9 (85b))

Thus Jeremiah 14:8 indicate that Jesus is the true Baptism and Ezekiel 36:25 describes the mode simply as sprinkling.

Baptism of Conversion in New Covenant

"Then I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols I will cleanse you" (Ez. 36:25).

You will notice that Jer. 14:8 is translated as "God is Israel's hope" in all English translations . The sprinkling or immersion baptism is simply the statement of hope of redemption. It is the Spirit that gives life and new birth.

What is the correct symbolization of being united in Christ in his death and resurrection?

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Romans 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Galatians 3:27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

These verses indicate that baptism is a symbol of a man's identification with Jesus in his death and resurrection. This is the basis of salvation through substitution – that the death he died he died for me

2Corinthians 5:15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

This symbolism had been appealed to by those who hold immersion is the only form of scriptural baptism. So I also thought. This is because we are still thinking in our own terms. When I die, I die lying on a bed with my face looking up and I am buried in the like manner in the earth. I am covered with soil. I expect to rise up from the dead emerging out of the grave when I am called by Jesus. This is the physical aspect. Is that the way Christ died, buried and rose again? We hardly think about it when we argue over the mode of baptism. How did Christ die for my sins? He died on the cross standing up. That is how he died for my sins. Blobs of blood trickled down from his brows and hands and feet and also from his heart from where gushed out water and blood. How can I be identified with my Lord in his death? What is the best symbolism of baptism, than

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standing erect –as Jesus was (probably I should extend my arms to replicate cross) – with water dripping from my head trickling down my brows?

How was Jesus buried? He was never buried.

Luk 23:52 This man (Joseph of Arimatthew) went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Luk 23:53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid.

Jesus was never buried. He was wrapped in clothes and then laid in a cave. . In baptism we are buried with Christ in his tomb rather than Jesus being buried with us in water. To symbolize being wound around with linen and covered in a symbolic cloth cave would have been far easier than using water and being dipped with the nose pinched. So also he never came out of the grave from the mud that covered him. He simply walked out of the coverings and walked out of the cave.

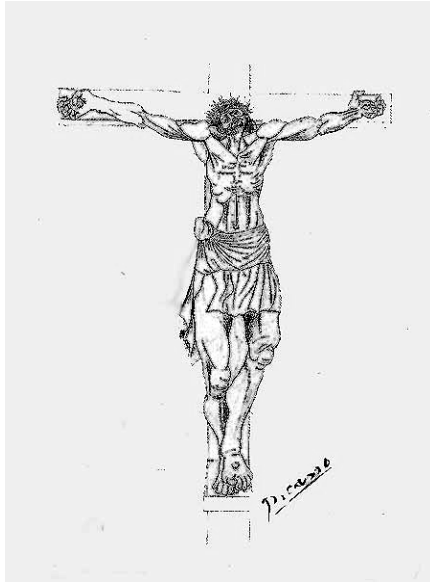
Thus symbolically baptism by total immersion is far from the symbol it is supposed to represent. The only mode, which replicated the believer's identification with Jesus and his resurrection, is the baptism by pouring of water over the head or sprinkling while the candidate is standing erect. This has been the method of baptism practiced through the ages until the reaction to corruption of the institutionalized church had to be expressed in concrete forms. Total immersion was one of the expressions against traditional Christianity. A revival and regeneration and converting the symbolism into meaningful everyday experience became necessary. To

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the modern man death and resurrection were always associated with burial and exhuming. The old forms were not recognizable to the generation or were indeed misunderstood. The message was to be retranslated into current cultural understandings. In that sense what better form of baptism is there than total immersion.

Immersion represents clearly my death and my resurrection (even though it does not represents my identification with Christ). So I can identify with it. I am simply declaring to the rest of the community that the old me is no more. It is spiritually a great transformation. I have seen this happening in many in my life. They would not have received these spiritual blessings the established this transformation by anything else. It does not matter whether physically it is the baptism which Jesus' disciples and early Christians gave or not. We need to translate them into our cultural norms. Haven't we translated the Bible into English and other languages? We have revised our old languages into modern form so that it may become intelligible to our generation

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Picasso's Crucifixion



The Tomb of Jesus

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Entombment of Jesus involved winding his body with sheets and placing on a stone table inside a rock cave. **Fra Angelico. *Entombment*. c.1441.**

Museo di San Marco, Cell 2, Florence, Italy

Comparison of various modes

Baptism	Immerse	Sprinkle Or Pour	Pour standing in water
Water Act 8:36 See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Much water Joh 3:23 And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came and were baptized.	Yes	No	Yes

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Down Into water Act 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.	Yes	No	Yes
Standing up Acts 22:16" And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away calling on his name."	No	Yes	Yes
Both people in Act 8:38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.	Yes	No	Yes
A death with Jesus Rom 6:3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?	No Immersion does not represent Jesus' death on the cross	Yes	Yes Jesus died in erect position not lying down
Burial with Jesus Rom 6:4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.	No Jesus was placed in a cave and not covered with soil	No	Yes
A Resurrection with Jesus Rom 6:4 that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.	No Christ did not emerge out of the ground but walked -	No	Yes

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	got up and walked.		
Washing of Regeneration Tit 3:5 by the washing of regeneration	Yes? Is there washing here?	No	Yes
Body washed Heb 10:22 having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with	No There is no sprinkling here. Is there e a washing?	Yes	Yes
Up out of water Act 8:39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. Mat 3:16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water:	Yes? It does not explain straight way up	No	Yes
See also The Biblical Mode of Baptism Rev. Robert C. Harbach (http://www.prca.org/pamphlets/pamphlet_8.html)			

What is the scriptural mode of baptism?

Rom 2:28 For he is not a Jew (Christian), which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision (baptism), which is outward in the flesh:

Rom 2:29 But he is a Jew (Christian), which is one inwardly; and circumcision (baptism) is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

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Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Col 3:11 Where there is neither Greek (Western) nor Jew (Eastern), circumcision (immersion) nor uncircumcision (sprinkling) , Barbarian (Methodist), Scythian (Baptist), bond (Pentecostal) nor free (Salvation Army): but Christ is all, and in all.

In whose name?

*Matt. 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.***

At least in this case Jesus gave definite formula. But did he? In the following passages we see a different formula.

The Jews, *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).*

The Samaritans. *"They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16).*

The Gentiles. *"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).* (The earliest Greek manuscripts that we have say, "In the name of Jesus Christ," as do most versions today.)

The disciples of John (rebaptized). *"They were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5).*

The Apostles Paul. *"Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).*

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Moreover, the Epistles contain a number of references or allusions to baptism in Jesus' name. See Romans 6:3-4; I Corinthians 1:13; 6:11; Galatians 3:27 ; Colossians 2:12; James 2:7.

Is there confusion here?

Most churches uses the formula of Jesus according to Matthew. But there are others who objects and insists on Peter- after all salvation is in no one else. The point is that there is no mystic power in the chant. Mantras have meaning only in the translation of it in the minds of the hearers. Power does not lie in the words, but in the author of the word.

A solution to the problem is the understanding of the unity of Godhead in the Triune God. When we invoke one, we are invoking all. "Hear O Israel, The Lord your Gods are ONE God". Even in doing so what we are actually involved in is legalistic hair splitting. The whole issue of baptism with water appears to be a Pharisaic attempt of believers. Word without Spirit is legalism and the Spirit without Word is fanaticism.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

DID JESUS INSTITUTE BAPTISM?

The oft-quoted passage to show that Jesus instituted water baptism and that it is essential for salvation is found in John

(John 3): "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he can not enter into the Kingdom of God."

However a close reading of the text in context cannot validate this interpretation. This discussion between Nicodemus and Jesus took place long before Jesus started his ministry. The statement is in the context of comparison between "that which is born of the flesh" and "that, which is born of the spirit". The question of baptism was not even remotely intended. A correct reading of the text simply shows that the words "born of water" simply means born of the flesh. All flesh was created through water and human birth is through the water from their mother's womb. This is the traditional Jewish expression for human birth. This is the only explanation that is permissible within the context. The next sentence "That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit " corroborates it as the usual parallel literary style of the master.

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It is claimed that Christ instituted baptism as He commissioned His Apostles to baptize, as narrated in John, iii and iv. There is nothing directly in the text as to the institution. This baptism was called the Baptism by Jesus even though He himself did not baptize. This was long before death and resurrection of Christ, that any attempt to associate this baptism with Baptism connected with the Holy Spirit is out of question. Evidently it was a continuation of the Baptism of John and the message associated with that baptism was the same as that of John's baptism viz., "The Kingdom of God is at hand". John in fact compares the baptism of John with that of Jesus and mentions no difference except in the numbers. They were identical in all respects even to the minute details. These baptisms were simply symbols of discipleship a pledge of total allegiance.

St. John Chrysostom (Hom. xxviii in Joan.), Theophylactus (in cap. iii, Joan.), and Tertullian (De Bapt., c. ii) declare that the baptism given by the Disciples of Christ as narrated in these chapters of John was a baptism of water only and not of the Holy Ghost; the reason is that the Holy Ghost was not given until after the Resurrection. It is evident from John, 3 and 4; Christ certainly conferred baptism, and that only by the hands of His Disciples, before His passion. The baptism by Jesus is only "with the Holy Spirit" The traditions that are unreliable (Niceph. Hist. eccl, II, iii; Clem. Alex. Strom. III) declares that Jesus baptized the Apostle Peter, and that the latter baptized Andrew, James, and John, and they the other Apostles. These cannot be considered as valid and all evidence for any institution of baptism by Jesus is nonexistent.

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In the Great commission command "Go and teach. ...baptizing" does not involve an institution but a command to the continuation of what they were doing from the beginning of the ministry. Notice that the Great commission refers to teaching and disciplining those who receive the Gospel. These baptisms were simply intended as a declaration of the Lordship of Jesus and never as a means of salvation by its own merit. This was the means of joining the Way – the initiation into the New Way.

We have seen that Historically, John used the Prosetelysing baptism into a baptism of repentance. The Jew who was also circumcised received the baptism when they joined to become the disciple of John. Jesus establishing the Way simply used the same baptism symbol. Initially like John, Jews were the only converts to the Way. But later when Gentiles began to join the Way, they were required to be circumcised first and later baptized. The circumcision group demanded that claiming the Way as a Jewish cult. It was overthrown at the Council of Jerusalem under the Chair of James the Just which declared the Way as an independent religion apart from the Jewish religion.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS



"Baptism shall be given to all those who have learned repentance and amendment of life, and who believe truly that their sins are taken away by Christ, and to all those who walk in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and wish to be buried with Him in death, so that they may be resurrected with Him and to all those who with this significance request it (baptism) of us and demand it for themselves. This excludes all infant baptism, the highest and chief abomination of the Pope. In this you have the foundation and testimony of the apostles. Matt. 28, Mark 16, Acts 2, 8,

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16, 19. This we wish to hold simply, yet firmly and with assurance."
(Anabaptists)

These were the basic convictions of the Swiss Brethren and of the Hutterian Brethren of Moravia, as well as of the Dutch Obbenites (Mennonites). These groups were known as Anabaptists and were the forerunners of the modern Baptist and Pentecostal movement. "Infants are not able to hear the Word of God, they are not capable of Holy Spirit conviction, and they cannot repent and exercise faith in Jesus Christ. They cannot make the appeal of a good conscience with God, they cannot promise to renounce sin and live a life of faithful discipleship to Christ." Those who profess "believer's baptism" as a tradition of men therefore condemn it.

Infant Baptism is not found in the Bible

One of the basic arguments against Infant Baptism is that it is never found in the Bible. Basically these people assume that every teaching of the early Apostles and of Christ are found in the Bible. This assumption is essentially wrong. This is a wrong understanding of Sola Scriptura. I have elsewhere written on the meaning of this phrase. Not all things taught and done by Christ are given to us through the scriptures. This is clearly stated in the conclusion of John's Gospel. (John 20:30; 21:25; 2 John 12; 3 John 13-14). There were many things the living witnesses knew and which were embedded in the church rituals, practices, traditions and activities, which are not written down. These traditions

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carry weight as long as they do not contradict the scripture. When these practices were carried over from the previous covenant, it was superfluous to reiterate them. Infant baptism is one of them. It is not the absence of scriptural support but contradiction that matters.

Baptism is a Covenant Symbol

First let us remind ourselves that Baptism is a covenant symbol. Like the circumcision it was to be borne by all who are of the household of Israel - the true Israel being Christians. There is only one people of God, throughout the ages, both in the old and in the new dispensation: the true Israel, the seed of Abraham. The plan and purposes of God remained constant through out history, through differing covenants. In each dispensation God did use different methods and different covenant symbols. Though they differ in form, their purpose, meaning and efficacy remain the same.

Rom. 9: 6-8: "Not as though the word of God had taken none effect. For they are not all Israel which are of Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Rom. 4:11-16: "And he (Abraham) received the sign of circumcision a seal of the righteousness of the faith that righteousness might be imputed unto them also For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed;

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not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all."

What Paul is stating clearly is that

1. Circumcision is a seal of the righteousness of faith. It was a sign of the circumcision of heart- cutting away of the old man
2. This promise is not to Abraham alone, but to his seed, through the law and also to all seed which includes us all.

Even though the infants were not able to distinguish between right and wrong, Lord insisted that all infants should receive the sign.

The strongest argument of Continuity of Covenant is presented by Calvin.

A summary of this can be read at A Summary of John Calvin's Defense of Paedobaptism by Andrew Sandlin http://www.forerunner.com/puritan/PS.Calvin_baptism.html

Circumcision compared to Baptism

We know that all who were circumcised were not believers –

Rom. 2:28, 29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

There were many who did not confess their sins and walked contrary to the will of God. They received punishment due to it.

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Lev. 26:40, 41: "If they shall confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity."

Knowing that not all those who receive the circumcision will be believers, Lord gave the sign of circumcision even unto infants. Now from the description of the sign it is evident that both the signs – circumcision and baptism – have exactly the same meaning viz. repentance and turning back to God.

Old covenant: Circumcision	New Covenant: Baptism
<p>Deut. 10:16: "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart and be no more stiff-necked."</p> <p>Deut. 30:6: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your seed to love the Lord thy God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live."</p> <p>Jer. 4:4: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord and take away the foreskin of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem."</p>	<p>Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost</p> <p>Act 22:16: "And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."</p> <p>Rom. 6:4: "Therefore, we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life."</p> <p>Gal. 3 :28: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."</p>

Apart from the comparison between the signs Paul actually equates them in the following passages:

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Col. 2:11, 12: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism, whereas also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." .

Phil. 3 :3: "For we are the circumcision which worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

	Circumcision	Baptism
Ritual	cut flesh	cleanse flesh
Reality	circumcision of Christ circumcise the heart cut off "flesh"	baptism by the Spirit cleanse the heart wash the conscience
Recipients	Jewish nation All in the household (males)	Every nation All in the household (males and females)

The only difference is the recipients which now includes all nations and includes females.

Paul notes that baptism has replaced circumcision referring to baptism as "the circumcision of Christ" and "the circumcision made without hands." Of course, it was mainly infants who were circumcised under the Old Law; circumcision of adults were rare, because Jews were very intolerant to gentiles and refused consistently to evangelize. If Paul, in making this parallel, meant to exclude infants from baptism, he would have said so.

Essence of Covenant did not Change

The strange fact about covenants is that they always included the seed.

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So we see.

Covenant	Visible Sign	Descendants Included
Creation/Adamic	Tree of Life	YES: Gen. 3:15: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed."
Noahic	Rainbow	YES: Gen. 9:9. "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you."
Abrahamic (Other Patriarchs)	Circumcision Sacrifices/Meals	YES : Covenant Gen. 9:9. "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you."
Mosaic	Passover (blood, then meal)	YES: Gen. 17:7. "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." Deut. 29:10-12 as "standing before the Lord their God, with their little ones, and their wives, to enter into covenant with the LORD their God"
Davidic	***	YES
New Covenant	Baptism (entrance) Lord's Supper (continuance)	? Acts 2:39 "The promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off, as many as the Lord our God shall call,".

Even in the New Covenant: it is given in exactly the same term

Evidently this is not referring to the children when they become old enough to understand. Only addition was that the new covenant extents beyond nation and proximity.

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*“Behold, I create new heavens, and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. For as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, **and their offspring with them.**”*
Isaiah 65: 17. 22, 23.

The fact which is often forgotten to our peril is, that family is the unit of the Kingdom of God and not individual. God actually thinks in terms of the mankind as a whole. Children are born citizens of the state in which their parents resided at the time of their birth. In virtue of their birth they are plenary citizens, bound by all the duties, and entitled to all the privileges of that relation, whenever they become capable of exercising them. From these duties they cannot be liberated. Of these privileges they cannot be deprived. When God selected Israel as a Kingdom of God, He told them Exo 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: Exo 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.. Peter uses the same words when referring to the new election. 1Peter 2:9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. The two kingdoms are identical. They are kingdoms and not a conglomeration of adult believing individuals. Somehow in the modern mind this aspect got lost.

"And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: every

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man-child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And be that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger which is not of thy seed," Gen. 17 :9-12.

In the old dispensation, then, children, all children that were born in the generations of the seed of Abraham must receive the sign of circumcision, the seal of the righteousness which is by faith, of a new heart, of conversion and sanctification irrespective of whether they had faith or not.

The perpetuity of the Abrahamic covenant, and, of consequence, the identity of the church under both dispensations, is plainly taught in scripture. The same Kingdon with the same divine Head, the same covenant, the same spiritual design, the same atoning blood, and the same sanctifying Spirit. The consummation of both the covenant dinner were presided over by the same Lord with blood – one in the Mount Sinai and the other in the upper room. , The author of Hebrews clearly declares that "Unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them" (Heb. 4:2). Again, in writing unto the Corinthians, Paul syas that "They (The Old Covenant Church) did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank it of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:3). "Abraham," we are told, "rejoiced to see Christ's day; he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). Thus the new covenant is nothing but the extension of the old.

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Even though within the Old covenant everyone received the sign of the covenant blessing in circumcision, not everyone was saved. Even though all the Israel who left Egypt under Moses were circumcised and were baptized under the cloud and the sea, none of them except two entered Canaan because it was Hebrews 4:2 not being mixed with faith .

Romans 2:25 For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.

It is the same principle in Baptism that is given to the infants. For your baptism (circumcision) verily profiteth, (Rom 10:9) if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, (thou keep the law:); but if thou do not confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead (be a breaker of the law), thy baptism (circumcision) is made unbaptism (uncircumcision). Cyprian talks about Baptism as the Spiritual Circumcision in his Epistle LVIII Christian Classics Ethereal Library (<http://www.ccel.org/>). Justin Martyr in his *Dialog with Trypho the Jew*, states that Baptism is the circumcision of the New Testament.

Romans 2:26-29 Therefore if the (unbaptism) uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his (unbaptism) uncircumcision be counted for (baptism) circumcision . And shall not (unbaptism) uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and dost transgress the law? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that (baptism) circumcision , which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew (Chrisitan), which is one inwardly; and is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

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Romans 3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew (Christian)? or what profit is there of circumcision (Baptism)?

Romans 3:30 Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the (baptism) uncircumcision by faith, and (unbaptism) uncircumcision through faith.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the (baptism) uncircumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

1Corinthians 7:19 (baptism) uncircumcision is nothing, and (unbaptism) uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.

Galatians 5:6 For in Jesus Christ neither (baptism) uncircumcision availeth any thing, nor (unbaptism) uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither (baptism) circumcision availeth any thing, nor (unbaptism) uncircumcision, but a new creature.

Ephesians 2:11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called (unbaptised) uncircumcision by that which is called the (baptized) Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

Philippians 3:3 For we are the baptized (circumcision), which worship God in the spirit, and rejoyce in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Colossians 2:11 In whom (Jesus) also ye are (baptized) circumcised with the (baptism) circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the (baptism) circumcision of Christ:

Colossians 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, (baptized) circumcision nor (unbaptized) uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Titus 1:10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the (baptism) circumcision:

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The essence of the sign was never abolished, the form was. There is still the sign which is a seal of the righteousness which is by faith, of regeneration and sanctification, of repentance and the washing away of sins. It was to be applied to all thy seed after thee. In the case of Abraham, he received it as an Adult and but to Ishamel and Issac, it was given even when they were children. In the new covenant however the demarcation between the three groups Jew and Gentile; Slave and Free; Male and Female were removed.

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

The old sign could not be administered to the female who were also to be given the sign and the seal under the new covenant. Hence the sign itself was to be changed. This was so understood by the early church and so practiced without doubt. Hence New Testament do not have to make a new command. If there was any change, then it was to be given specifically. The argument from the silence is in favor of the infant baptism and not otherwise. In fact it will be a violation the Lord's command if this is not done. "Any uncircumcised (unbaptized) male (or female), who has not been (baptized) circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people (fro the church where he belongs – indicating that particular group); he has broken my covenant" (Genesis 17:14).

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	Circumcision	Baptism Circumcision of Heart
Symbolic Value of the Rite	Need for cleansing.	Need for cleansing.
	Provision for cleansing.	Provision for cleansing.
	Union with God and His elect.	Union with Christ and with His elect.
The Sealing Power of the Rite	It is offered to all who believe.	It is offered to all who believe.
	It incorporates all into a family : Israel.	It incorporates all into a family - the church .
	For all who believe, it seals the internal reality of cleansing which it symbolically represents.	For those who believe, it seals the internal reality of cleansing which it symbolically represents.
The Recipients of the Rite	All who profess faith were to be circumcised.	All who profess faith in Christ are to be baptized.
	Infant children of those who professed faith were to be baptized on the 8 th day.	Should we baptize our children? When?

Jesus' command in the context of History

Christianity started as a cult within Judaism. Jesus did not introduce baptism. It probably started right from the Leviticus times when the gentiles joined the Jews. We have mentioned the proselytization baptism earlier. It consisted of two steps. Circumcision and Baptism. John's

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baptism differed because John was asking the Jews to be baptized as though they were gentiles. John's message was the same as that of Paul, which said, "A true Jew is not one who is physically circumcised but who is spiritually circumcised." Baptism was the token of spiritual circumcision. So when Jesus commanded his disciples he was simply asking them to continue the same method. In the proselytisation procedure normally whole families were circumcised and baptized including the children. However the children who were not of age were permitted to renounce the faith and go back. The children who were born to the proselytes were circumcised as a Jew and not baptized. Hence when the Christian faith began to spread outside the Jewish group both circumcision and baptism was performed. This was the controversy of the period between Circumcision Group and others, which Paul mentions. The decision that circumcision is not necessary was the beginning of Christianity as an independent religion apart from Judaism.

There were very clear definitions and understandings handed down by Sages which were the basis of Rabbinic teachings even at the time of Jesus. There were clear understanding regarding covenantal or contractual benefits for children. Claiming a benefit on behalf of others are clearly allowed under Gittin 11b; Kiddushin 23a [2x]; Bava Metzia 12a. It also clearly defines that the beneficiary need not have any awareness of such claims according to Ketuvot 7b and Nedarim 36b. In fact even an unborn child can be claimed for any contractual or covenantal claims according to Ketuvot 7b. Specifically the Talmud deals with the conversion to Judaism by minors along with the parents in

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Ketuvot 11a. These children may also be immersed as a part of the conversion. However the child is bound to this conversion only as long as he is a minor and can refuse the conversion upon reaching maturity.

(<http://www.aishdas.org/webshas/spec/social/katan/ger.htm>)

Jesus and the Apostles certainly assumed this.

In the beginning when the converts were adults, we should expect only adult baptism and they were indeed described in the New Testament history. However it automatically assumes that the whole family particularly the minor children were also converted in accordance with the Rabianic teachings of the time. So How did the Apostles and the disciples to whom the Great Commission was given understood the process of conversion? Did it include children?

All household baptisms in Acts strongly imply that even adult dependents (leave alone the possibility of minors and infants) of the household allowed the head of the household to dictate the faith that they were to profess. If this is the case, then the New Testament Church would seem to have admitted and baptized members who did not openly professed a personal faith in Jesus Christ.

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A Study of Conversion in the Book of Acts

Scripture	Faith	Repent- ance	Baptism	Forgive- ness	Holy Spirit	Church
Acts 2:14-47 3000 at Jerusalem	Implied vv. 37,41	Stated v. 38	Stated v. 38	Stated v. 38	Stated v. 38	Implied vv. 8-47
Acts 8:9-13 Samaria	Stated vv. 12,13		Stated vv. 12,13			Implied vv. 8-13
Acts 8:26-39 Eunuch	Implied v. 36		Stated v. 38	Implied v. 39	Implied v. 39	
Acts 9:1-19 Saul/paul	Implied vv. 5,17	Implied v. 9	Stated v. 18		Stated v. 17	Implied vv. 17- 18
Acts 10:1- 11:18 Cornelius	Implied 10:1-8	Stated 11:18	Stated 10:48			Implied 11:17-18
Acts 16:13-15 Lydia	Stated vv. 14, 15		Stated v. 15			Implied v.15
Acts 16:25-34 Jailer	Stated vv. 31,34		Stated v. 33	Stated v. 31		Implied vv. 31- 33

Only factor that is common in all these events is the baptism whereby they were joined to the Way. All other factors are left implied. In every

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case the person baptized was from a non-Christian family. The logical conclusion that we can make out of this is that whenever an adult member is converted from another religion, they should be joined to church only after baptism.

But when these converts had families they were given baptism as households following the tradition. There was no need for Jesus to specifically mention this "baptize households" or "baptize infants also". This was implied in '*and teach all nations, baptizing them*' Baptism was automatically given to the babies born to the converts in true Judaic tradition. If this were not to be done, Jesus would have specified it. So Lydia was converted by Paul's preaching. "She was baptized, with her household" (Acts 16:15). The Philippians jailer whom Paul and Silas had converted to the faith, "the same hour of the night . . . he was baptized, with all his family" (Acts 16:33). And in his greetings to the Corinthians, Paul recalled that, "I did baptize also the household of Stephanas" (1 Cor. 1:16). When babies were born in their families they were baptized instead of circumcision in accordance with the tradition.

Household included not only husband and the wife, but also children and all extended families that lived together including probably parents, brothers, sisters, slaves and all their families. . To consider that there were no infants in any household could come only from a modern disintegrated understanding of "household".

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"Normally the family included everyone who shared a common dwelling place under the protection of the head of the family. They might be grandparents, servants, and visitors, as well as widowed daughters and their children. The extended family commonly included sons and their wives and children (Lev. 18:6–18). God counted Abraham's slaves as part of the family group, for He required Abraham to circumcise them (Gen. 17:12–14, 23–27). In Israel's early history, as many as four generations lived together. This was a normal part of the semi-nomadic lifestyle and the later agricultural one. At least by New Testament times, the meaning of extended family encompassed parents, children, and slaves (cf. Eph. 5:21–6:9)."

The New Testament says that Joseph and Mary traveled as a couple to be registered in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4–5). They went to the temple alone when Mary offered her sacrifices (Luke 2:22). They also traveled alone when they took Jesus into Egypt (Matt. 2:14). These accounts tend to confirm that the "family" of the New Testament consisted only of the husband, wife, and children." (Illustrated manners and customs, Logos Library System) This system is nothing new and exists even today in most normal sane cultures.

Modern fallen man cannot understand what it means to be a member of a household. In the sophisticated, self-centered civilization as ours, we understand household only as husband and wife or even worse each partner individually. The whole concept of baptism to be given to

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individuals only is a modern capitalistic concept and is alien to the early cultures. We are surprised when wives joined their husbands in confession of faith in the cases mentioned. So we struggle to get an explanation, why the spouses and (at least adult) children were also given baptism by the Apostles. What happened to their freedom of choice?

In total contrast in the books of the New Testament that were written later in the first century, when we can certainly assume there were children born to Christian parents we never--not even once--find an example of a child raised in a Christian home who is baptized as an adult "on confession of faith". It's always assumed that the children of Christian homes are already Christians, that they have already been "baptized into Christ" (Rom. 6:3). If infant baptism were not the rule, then we should have references to the children of Christian parents joining the Church only after they had come to the age of reason, and there are no such records in the Bible.

In all covenants children are bound by the covenants given to their parents. If this was true of Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants it is also true to the new Covenant. All these are "for you and to children in all generations." That is why circumcision was given even to the infants. This principle was never abrogated. It does not matter whether the children agree or not, they are bound by the covenant of the fathers. They can violate it losing the blessings and benefits. That is what happened with the nation of Israel. Someone outside of the covenant can

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enter into the covenant only upon agreeing to the covenant terms. Believer's adult baptism is prescribed to people who are outside the household of believing families.

Non-Household Baptisms	Household Baptisms
	Cornelius and household
Samaritans: ("both men and women") Simon the Sorcerer	Lydia and household
Ethiopian Eunuch (alone travelling)	Philippian Jailer and household
Paul (alone travelling)	Crispus (and household)
Disciples of John (12 men)	Stephanas and household
3000 (souls) at Pentecost (Some with household?)	
Gaius (and household?)	

The New Testament records eleven cases of baptism, which may be found in Mat.3, Acts 2, 8,8,11,16,18,19 and 1 cor 1. It is significant that five of these cases were households (or family) baptisms where the entire families were baptized and not individual members. Baptism in these cases were for the families and not individuals. Families of Cornelius, Lydia, the Philippians jailer, Crispus and Stephanus were baptized. They all joined the body of Christ including the infants if they had any. Gaius must have been baptized with his whole family as Paul cites Gaius along with Crispus. "I baptized *none of you* except Crispus and Gaius" (1Co 1:14). But this is only by association. Paul did not have to mention it specifically because it was understood so. Romans 16:23 we read that "Gaius [is] host to me and to the whole church." How else could he play

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the host without the support of his family. But that is reading the situation. The Eunuch and Paul were travelling alone when they were baptized. They certainly did not have an immediate family. The 3000 at the pentecost were foreigners who travelled from far off for the pentecost gathering. Probably no families were with them. Most likely there were some with families also According to the Hebrew tradition only men as head of the households were counted. It was understood that when the head of the family joined the Way, the whole household automatically received it. But at the Pentecost this counting heads of families would not work because some had their families with them. Hence we are given the count as 3000 souls. "They are said to be *three thousand souls* (which word is generally used for persons when women and children are included with men, as Gen. 14:21, *margin, Give me the souls*; Gen. 46:27, *seventy souls*), which intimates that those that were here baptized were not so many men, but so many heads of families as, with their children and servants baptized, might make up *three thousand souls*." (Mathew Henry's Commentary) The disciples of John were only men gathered together without their families when Paul addressed them - probably in the Johannanite Essenic tradition. That leaves only Simon the Sorcerer who turns out to be an apostate. As can be read he was a power hungry loner.

In the context of modern missiological situations, we need to look at the jailer's confession. The head of the family confessed and the entire family was baptized. This is very similar to Abraham's case. Abraham believed God and the covenant symbol was given to all the tribe. In

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modern missiology we come across similar situations in people's movement. We have the chief of the tribe confessing and all the tribe is baptized. This is one trouble with self based- individual based Christian faith at the expense of organic faith of the community. Both are relevant. We need to consider the family as the basic unit, if not the tribe as a whole.

It appears to me that suspension of infant baptism and the introduction of the believer's baptism is a development due to the disintegration of the household and family and marriage. Salvation of the individual without an underlying organic family, community is simply the product of the capitalism based entirely on self – "everyman unto himself".

CHAPTER NINE

HISTORICAL EVIDENCES.

Historical Evidences from the writings of Early Church Fathers.

Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries*; Revised Edition (Abilene: ACU Press, 1984) .

Polycarp (69-155), a disciple of the Apostle John, was baptized as an infant. This enabled him to say at his martyrdom. "Eighty and six years have I served the Lord Christ" (*Martyrdom of Polycarp* 9: 3).

Justin Martyr (100 - 166) of the next generation states about the year 150, "Many, both men and women, who have been Christ's disciples since childhood, remain pure at the age of sixty or seventy years" (*Apology 1: 15*). Further, in his *Dialog with Trypho the Jew*, Justin Martyr states that Baptism is the circumcision of the New Testament.

Irenaeus: (120-202 AD) "He came to save all through Himself - all I say, who through Him are reborn in God-infants, and children, and youth, and old men. Therefore He passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, sanctifying infants; a child for children, sanctifying those who are of that age, and at the same time becoming for them an

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example of piety, of righteousness, and of submission; a young man for youths, becoming an example for youths and sanctifying them for the Lord.". (*Against Heresies* II.22.4)

In his Homily on Luke he again states his beliefs on infant baptism:

"Infants are baptized for the remission of sins. What sins? Whenever have they sinned? In fact, of course, never. And yet: 'No one is free from defilement.' (Job 14:4) But defilement is only put away by the mystery of baptism. That is the reason why infants too are baptized."

Hippolytus: (170-236 A.D.) And they shall baptize the little children first. And if they can answer for themselves, let them answer. But if they cannot, let their parents answer or someone from their family. And next they shall baptism the grown men; and last the women. (*Apostolic Tradition* 21.3-5)

Origen: 180 A.D Origen was born about 180 A.D. and he was baptized as an infant, Remember, this was eighty years or less after the death of the Apostle John. There are still earlier references which seem to speak of infant baptism, but there is no question in the case of Origen.*

"I take this occasion to discuss something which our brothers often inquire about. Infants are baptized for the remission of sins. Of what kinds? Or when did they sin? But since "No one is exempt from stain," one removes the stain by the mystery of baptism. For this reason infants

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are baptized. For "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." (*Homily on Luke 14:5*).

[After quoting Psalm 51:5 and Job 14:4] These verses may be adduced when it is asked why, since the baptism of the church is given for the remission of sins, baptism according to the practice of the church is given even to infants; since indeed if there is in infants nothing which ought to pertain to forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be superfluous. (*Homily on Leviticus 8:3*).

[After quoting Leviticus 12:8 and Psalm 51:5] For this also the church had a tradition from the apostles, to give baptism even to infants. For they to whom the secrets of the divine mysteries were given knew that there is in all persons the natural stains of sin which must be washed away by the water and the Spirit. On account of these stains the body itself is called the body of sin. (*Commentary on Romans 5:9*)

Cyprian: In respect of the case of infants, which you say ought not to be baptized within the second or third day after birth, and that the law of ancient circumcision should be regarded, so that you think that one who is just born should not be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day, we all thought very differently in our council. For in this course which you thought was to be taken, no one agreed; but we all rather judge that the mercy and grace of God is not to be refused to any one born of man... Spiritual circumcision ought not to be hindered by carnal circumcision... we ought to shrink from hindering an infant, who, being lately born, has

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not sinned, except in that, being born after the flesh according to Adam, he has contracted the contagion of the ancient death at its earliest birth, who approaches the more easily on this very account to the reception of the forgiveness of sins - that to him are remitted, not his own sins, but the sins of another" (*Letter 58 to Fidus*).

Augustine: For from the infant newly born to the old man bent with age, as there is none shut out from baptism, so there is none who in baptism does not die to sin. (*Enchiridion*; ch. 43)

Justin Martyr: refers of women who became disciples from childhood- ek paidon- from infancy.

The Council of Carthage in AD 253 discusses the problem of whether the children should be baptized before the traditional eighth day.

Tertullian (160 - 215):The only opponent to Infant Baptism during the first three centuries as far we know was Tertullian , bishop of Carthage, Africa. His objection was to the unfair ability laid on godparents when the children of pagans joined the church, However, his real opposition was more fundamental. It was his view that man will sin after the baptism and "it drives man out of the paradise of innocence" (*De Anima* 38:2). He embraced Montanism in 207. Their arguments are a proof that the Church baptized infants from the beginning. These men who were against it would have pointed out that infant baptism was not an Apostolic practice.

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In all probability Infant Baptism was of Apostolic origin.

The Witness of the Catacombs :Epitaphs of Children

"Early Christian inscriptions, which in the largest numbers come from the environs of Rome, furnish some instances of child and infant baptism for the third century . . . Nearly all the early Christian inscriptions are epitaphs. A considerable number of these are for the graves of children. The vast majority give no evidence whether the child was baptized or not . . . Actually the word "baptism" is seldom used. The idea is expressed by "received grace," "made a believer" or "neophyte" (newly planted " used to mean "newly baptized") -- from Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak: Faith and Life in the First Three Centuries*; Revised Edition (Abilene: ACU Press, 1984) .Epitaphs from 200 AD are found in abundance. See also *Issues, Etc. Journal* - Spring 1997 - Vol. 2 No. 3 *Infant Baptism in Early Church History* by Dennis Kastens)

"In that century there are attributes and symbols in tombstones inscriptions of little children which allows us to clearly infer we are dealing with baptized children. The following is as early as 200 or shortly thereafter:

In the second last line is the phrase *Dei Serv(u)s* which means slave of God followed by the Chi Rho symbol for Christ. The last line is the Greek *ichtheos* familiar as the "fish symbol" - an anagram for Jesus Christ God's Son Savior. These words and symbols mark the one-year, two months, and four-day-old child as a baptized Christian.

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From the Lateran Museum, also from the 200's, is a Greek inscription that gives information about the religious status of the parents. It reads, "I, Zosimus, a believer from believers, lie here having lived 2 years, 1 month, 25 days."

In the Roman catacomb of Priscilla is reference to a private emergency baptism that was administered to the one-and-three-quarter-year-old Apronianus and enabled him to die as a believer. The inscription reads:

“Dedicated to the departed Florentius made this inscription for his worthy son Apronianus who lived one year and nine months and five days. As he was truly loved by his grandmother and she knew that his death *was imminent, she asked the church that he might depart from, the world as a believer.* “

(ILCV I:1343, from the third century; edited by E. Diehl (second edition; Berlin, 1961))

“Postumius Eutenion, a believer, who obtained holy grace the day before his birthday at a very late hour and died. He lived six years and was buried on the fifth of Ides of July on the day of Jupiter on which he was born. His soul is with the saints in peace. Felicissimus, Eutheria, and Festa his grandmother to their worthy son Postumius.” (ILCV I:1524, from the early fourth century)

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“Sweet Tyche lived one year, ten months, fifteen days, Received [grace] on the eighth day before the Kalends. Gave up [her soul] on the same day.” (*Inscriptiones latinae christianae veteres*, Vol. I number 1531)

“Irene who lived with her parents ten months and six days received [grace] seven days before the Ides of April and gave up [her soul] on the Ides of April.” (ILCV I:1532)

“To Proiecto, neophyte infant, who lived two years seven months.” (ILCV I:1484)

Thus early Fathers and their documents confirm the Apostolic Tradition of Infant baptism.

CHAPTER TEN

REASONS FOR INFANT BAPTISM

Rom 3:1 What advantage then hath the Jew (Christian)? or what profit is there of circumcision (baptism)? Rom 3:2 Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. Rom 3:3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

Why did God insisted on circumcision and baptism also to be given to the children?

Since the sign itself did not give any benefit in terms of salvation, it gave them the privilege of receiving the oracles of God. It gave them the privilege of beign brought up within a community where the Word of God was heard. It is the Word that eventually lead the hearers to salvation.

Romans 10:14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

Children are expected to be brought up in the home. They are to be treated as part of the covenant community within the church and are

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required to live within the discipline of the community. Infant baptism and circumcision are just that. It gave them plenty of occasion to hear the word and be saved. Today, more and more children are growing as aliens to "churched homes" By the age of 18 they are "free" without ever being in the church or being part of any covenant fellowship. Their parents did not baptize them as a statement of faith that they will be saved. They never joined the community of believers in the prayer of faith on behalf of the child "I renounce Evil and accept Christ". Confirmation worked well in a churched society. You had something to confirm then, but now what do we have to confirm?. Today, in the midst of emphasis on individual freedom and individual salvation, children are not baptized, they are totally free and are given only a remote random chance of hearing the gospel and so to receive salvation. Why should the children pray or read the word when they are not part of the covenant community?. In that thought pattern of the modern society, the children must be given every opportunity to study all religion without any bias. Recent rulings of the Supreme Court of United States of America declares that. We should not grumble when the world insist on that. Your children do not belong to your church or faith. They belong to the nation – of the worldly Kingdom. Dare to take that stand as a believer?

"Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all, but is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:1-6).

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The child before receiving his power to act as independent person is still a heir but is being treated as a servant as under the Old Covenant of Law. When the fullness of time comes they will receive the full adoption.

When a family bring the child to the baptism he is claiming in faith this covenant for the child. You express your faith in doing it. It is the visible action corresponding to the faith. If a faith does not precede with corresponding action it is not true faith. Even if it does not bring any good to the child, it is every parent's duty to baptize the child in faith. Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. If you hope for the salvation of your children, bring them in that faith that they will be saved by grace. It is a bold statement of the faith of the parents. That is why Christian parents baptize their children at infancy. They, we believe are partakers of the covenant and will come to inheritance. It is an acted prayer of faith. Here the faith is followed by corresponding action. This is the normal steps in receiving the blessings we ask for. Have faith in God. Ask in faith. Believe and act as though you have already received it on the basis of the promise of Jesus. It will come to pass. But salvation of the child comes only by his/her faith. Evidently there need not be a specific time for this. It could be a continuous process of exercise especially for the children of Christian family. We may dedicate our children and they can then take adult baptism when they are old enough or we can give them baptism and they can claim the baptism as theirs as they grow up - a confirmation.

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Obviously the symbol has no significance or effect unless the change has happened within. The symbol does not save. Baptism never saves. The question here is whether the salvation should be prior to the baptism or not. An insistence of the chronological order is what is in question.

Insistence of chronological order of sin –repent- believe -forgiveness is filled with an inherent problem. Is the order sin –repent –sacrifice – forgiveness is a necessity? Notice that belief in Jesus' atoning sacrifice is counted as the believer's sacrifice. But sacrifice itself was done long long ago. If chronological order is insisted, Jesus' sacrifice, which was done once in history long ago will be of no effect today. So if the sacrifice can be made before I sinned, baptism can be also given before I sin. Just as claiming the sacrifice of Jesus as my sacrifice alone will save me, claiming the baptism which my parents gave me as my baptism alone will lead to salvation. Thus the efficacy of infant baptism lie in my confirming by faith.

An infant has not committed any sin. Infants do not need repentance. If they die on childbirth they, according to our Lord will be in the Kingdom, "for such is the Kingdom". Jesus was not speaking of infant like faith or anything like that. He took a real living child and set before the disciples and said "of such is the Kingdom"

Matthew 18:3 And Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Mat 18:2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, Mat 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not

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enter into the kingdom of heaven. Mat 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Mat 18:5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. Mat 18:6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Mat 18:10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

This event and descriptions are found in all the synoptic gospels and stands confirmed thrice.

Children therefore are indeed already converted and need no further confession. The seal is to validate this.

It is indeed surprising that people who hang on details on baptism verses miss this basic direct statement. Children are the pattern or the example to which every believer is to become before being given the symbol of baptism. If the children of the covenant community are not confirmed by such seal "it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of sea."

This may sound an exaggeration. But may I assure you, Jesus was not joking. I have been closely associated with missionaries in many continents and have known them through at least three generations in many cases. Most of the missionaries came to the knowledge of salvation from within the traditional Christian homes. I have seen only a few – countable within one set of fingers – who came from outside Christian homes. In almost all cases they insisted on adult believer's baptism and

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had not baptized their children in faith and bring them into the covenant community. As a result in 90% of the missionary families that I know off, over half the children are now unbaptized unbelievers.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

In baptizing our infants, the Christian parents are expressing their desire and their request is presented in concrete actions though the application of the covenant symbol in faith.

1Jo 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

1John 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

Unless we exercise this faith in action we will not receive.

James 2:22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

James 2:24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

This was in fact observed by Billy Graham so that he says:

"I have some difficulty in accepting the indiscriminate baptism of infants without a careful regard as to whether the parents have any intention of fulfilling the promise they make. But I do believe that something happens at the baptism of an infant, particularly if the parents are Christians and teach their children Christian Truths from childhood. We

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cannot fully understand the miracles of God, but I believe that a miracle can happen in these children so that they are regenerated, that is, made Christian, through infant baptism. If you want to call that baptismal regeneration, that's all right with me" (Graham, interview with Wilfred Bockelman, associate editor of the Lutheran Standard, October 10, 1961).

This has generated a hue and cry in the Pentecostal world. The miracle of God, which takes place in the baptism of children, is based on the faith of the parents. If you believe in the power of prayer, infant baptism is the most powerful prayer parents can ever make. 1 Jn 5:14-15: 14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us--whatever we ask--we know that we have what we asked of him.

There is no magic in baptism itself (adult or infant), but there is mountain-moving realization in asking in faith. This is the sacramental grace. Bringing up the children as full participant within the household of faith is the means by which God brings it to pass. Children are partakers of the covenant along with the parents. Generations of Christian experience support this reality. It is most surprising that we who claim the power of faith and prayer, let this power wasted on our children.

A child has not committed any sin. How can he be baptized for the remission of sin. He should first commit sin, repent and then be baptized. Is this a correct logic? If repentance and payment of sin were

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to be made precedent to the commitment of sin, Jesus' sacrifice is not valid for our sins. We were not even born when he died.

Disciple Argument

Believe and then Baptize vs. Baptize and then Believe

One major argument against Infant baptism is that "Before a person can be baptized, he must be taught. " ... A person must also believe before they are baptized. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). It is a command of God that everybody must repent to obey God. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30). We must confess Christ in order to be saved ...Can an infant do any of these things? "("Why Infant Baptism is wrong, at <http://www.gmi.edu/~nass7606/infants.htm>)

Mark 16: 16 is not speaking chronologically. In other words, the text is not saying first believe and then be baptized. The verbs "believe" and "baptized" are participles. These are related to "shall be saved" as a process though not as a condition. Any Christian who has been baptized as an infant when he believe in Jesus Christ can confidently say, "I believe, and I have been baptized."

The essential problem with this type of hermeneutics is the contention that baptism is a condition for salvation. I have shown in detail that this is not so. Most evangelicals will agree that baptism is not a condition of salvation. We have seen that baptism is a disciplining process, a sort of

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registering with a professor for further study . It is a sort of *anunayanam* by a teacher whereby the child is taken into the household of the teacher for further instructions till the child graduate. The teacher of course is the local visible church in the visible realm and the invisible organic church in the invisible realm. The text book is the Written Word of God as interpreted by the Holy Spirit. The instructor is the God Parents. In this view baptism of the infants is the initiation of the infant into the school of learning and the God Parents undertake to teach the child and discipline them into the knowledge of Jesus. This is exactly what the church has been doing through centuries. So we see a marked difference in the meaning of baptism which makes the practical difference between the *paedo* and *credo* groups.

Salvation as Unconditional Gift and in Baptism we receive it for our children.

Infants are not baptized because they believe. They are baptized because of the clear Word, command and promise of God. They are baptized on account of God's grace, not on account of their faith. Martin Luther writes, "For my faith does not constitute Baptism but receives it" (Tappert: p. 443).

Baptism is an act of God. God offers His gifts unconditionally, whether faith is present or not (1 Corinthians 10:2). While faith is needed to grasp the promises offered in this way, Baptism is done in obedience to God's

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command to baptize. The focus is always on what the person is doing or not doing and never on what God is doing and able to do.

Those who teach a "Believer's Baptism" are usually people who give emphasis on the freedom of choice of the individuals. We insist that the choice of religion is to be a personal decision. That is a good capitalistic democratic liberal thought. But are we really willing to go by that rule? In that case we should let our children be given instructions in Hinduism and Buddhism and all other religions of the world along with Christian Faith before they can make a conscious educated choice. Would you like to do that? Instead these very same people will follow a devious route allowing a slack in the child's early life.

Apparently whether you believe in child baptism or adult baptism the process are the same. Look at these two tracks.

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BELIEVER'S BAPTISM TRACK Symbolizes believer's response to God's salvation	INFANT BAPTISM TRACK Symbolizes God's initiating action in salvation. It is a statement that the church takes the responsibility of disciplining the child.
<p>Argument: "We want our children to choose Jesus for themselves". They are free individuals.</p> <p>We should be teaching our children Hinduism to make the free choice. We will not bind them with our faith.</p>	<p>Argument: "We want our children to choose Jesus"</p> <p>"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; ⁵ and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶ And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; ⁷ and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.</p>
<p>We will be violating our children's freedom of choice by binding them. Let them make their own choice.</p> <p>Democracy, Individual Freedom.</p>	<p>Gen. 18:⁹For I know (Abraham), that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD (Yahvh)</p>
<p>1. Infant dedication ceremony (a symbol of God's grace)</p> <p>2. Profession or Confirmation of Faith</p> <p>Public confession of faith in Christ as personal Lord and</p>	<p>1. Infant baptism ceremony (a symbol of God's grace)</p> <p>2. Profession or Confirmation of Faith</p> <p>Public confession of faith in Christ as personal Lord and Savior, and a period</p>

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<p>Savior, and a period or process of instruction or testing.</p> <p>3. Baptism ceremony (taking the vows of faithfulness). To be baptized as a symbol of personal regeneration involves sprinkling, pouring or immersion with water of an individual as an outward sign of an inward spiritual grace, or acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior.</p> <p>4. Church Membership</p>	<p>or process of instruction or testing.</p> <p>3. Dedication ceremony (taking the vows of faithfulness). Confirmation or dedication is a symbol of personal regeneration that involves the laying on of hands as an outward sign of an inward and spiritual receiving or acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior .</p> <p>4. Church Membership</p>
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So we see a logical fallacy and contradiction in the argument for believer's baptism. We are trying to keep our feet in two boats simultaneously. The result is disaster. The withholding of Baptism from infants could mean the loss of their salvation. To baptize them mistakenly, if it were in error, would have less serious consequences. God would forgive anyone who baptized infants in ignorance but with good motives.

The meaning of baptism is redefined by interpretation from an initiation process to a rite of passage process by many credo-baptist groups. None of the scriptural passages supports such an interpretation. The Jewish rite of passage – coming of age and maturity to join the community as full member of the church (this was 13) – as bar/bat mitzvah and not circumcision. In our study of verses we discovered that there can only be two interpretations possible. It is a salvific process (which we discarded) or it is an initiation process into discipleship to Christ. The children born in a covenant community do not require a conversion. "We believe that

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all children prior to the age of accountability, being covered by the atonement of Christ, are spiritually safe, and stand in need neither of any ceremony, such as baptism, nor of conversion." (The Nurture and Evangelism of Children, Mennonite Church, 1955 a CMEQ Source Document, The Nurture and Evangelism of Children A Statement Adopted by Mennonite General Conference, August 26, 1955.)

Marlin Jeschke, (*Believers' Baptism for Children of the Church* (Scottdale, 1983) explains this position of the Credo-baptists thus: "The New Testament pattern for the baptism of adult converts entering the messianic community from a fallen world cannot be applied in the same way to the children of the church, who should be expected to grow up under the nurture and influence of the Christian community and should not be expected to have the radical conversion of their first-generation ancestors. Their experience will rather be one of appropriation and ownership of the faith in which they have been raised." Jeschke argued for a new perspective on this issue to redefine baptism as an act to " move children from [their childhood] innocence to the Christian way in adolescence" and to baptize them at this point in their lives " as a sign of their crossing-over from innocence into an owned faith"

Thus we see that the actual believer's baptism is nothing but a confirmation of the spiritual experience of the child. which corresponds to Barmitzvah of the Jews. But Barmitzvah ritual was not necessary for the person to be a full communicant of the Judaic Community. "A child may have many significant religious experiences before the age of accountability, such as finding security by trust in Christ, experiencing a sense of forgiveness for his wrong acts, and enjoying private, family, and church worship and prayer." The Nurture and Evangelism of Children (Mennonite Church, 1955 a CMEQ Source Document, The Nurture and Evangelism of Children A Statement Adopted by Mennonite General Conference, August 26, 1955).

""By its very nature, the voluntaristic character of a believers church is valid only for one generation and must be repeatedly renewed as the faith is transmitted to the next generation. The problem is that the fervency and diligence of the first generation is seldom equaled by the succeeding generations. In order to bring the children of the voluntary members of

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any given generation into conformity with the normative vision, they are usually programmed by an educational process to make their own commitments preparatory to baptism. Communal and peer-group pressures to conform set in, and the corresponding parental or congregational obligations to guide them through the "rite of passage" seem to be most applicable at the lowest possible age of discretion." (Marlin Jeschke, *Believers' Baptism for Children of the Church* , Scottdale, 1983)

Thus we see that believer's baptism is not the biblical baptism as defined in New Testament; when referred to the children born in a Christian home. By redefining baptism as a rite of transition or passage, in contrast to initiation into discipleship, the original meaning and purpose of the baptism is radically changed by the credobaptists. We are then no longer talking about the same baptism as practiced by the Apostles or as commanded by Jesus

In the Jewish tradition there is a corresponding process of confirmation on adulthood where a child becomes responsible for his or her action. This is called Bar-Mitzvah.

"Our sages taught that a parent is responsible for the actions of a child until the child reaches the age of 13 years and one day, at which point, the child reaches the age of legal majority in the Jewish community and assume full responsibility for observing the commandments and for all his/her deeds. At the age of 13 and a day, a boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah (which means the "age of responsibility for the commandments") and a girl becomes Bat Mitzvah (some follow the tradition of considering a girl

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Bat Mitzvah at the age of 12 years and one day, on the basis of the Mishnah's granting her responsibility for her own vows at that age).

From the age of 13 and a day onward, a Jew is counted as part of a minyan [the quorum required for public prayer], eligible to read Torah publicly, and obligated to fulfill the dictates of Jewish life.

Every Jew becomes a Bar Mitzvah automatically. It is a change of legal status; it has nothing to do with how much an individual knows or has learned. No ceremony, certificate, or special service is required. However, it is a change of status that affects the entire community, since now there is an additional member to count in the minyan, and thus it has been customary to celebrate this milestone since the 1300's, though celebrations have always been small and modest until this century.

The centerpiece of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration is the child's first aliyah: the first time the child is permitted to ascend the bima and recite the blessings over the Torah on behalf of the congregation. In most congregations, the child also chants part of the Torah portion and the Haftarah portion, as well. In many congregations, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah also leads some or all of the service, this too being a function reserved for adults.

Traditionally, after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah assumes his/her place in the congregation, signified by reciting the blessings over the Torah, the parents recite a brief blessings thanking God for releasing them for the responsibility for their child's sins, since the child is now fully

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responsible before God for his/her own behavior. This ceremony would take place on the Shabbat, Monday, or Thursday following the child's becoming 13 years and one day."(Rabbi Amy R. Schinermann <http://ezra.mts.jhu.edu/~rabbiars/life-cycle/b-mitzvah.html>)

Thus according to Jewish tradition the "age of accountability" is 13 years plus one day for boys, 12 plus a day for girls. The rabbis regarded evaluations concerning maturity as too subjective, although it was clear that physical maturity and accompanying signs also carried significance.

The responsibility of the crimes committed before this age falls upon the parents, not the child.

The earliest source on this subject is the Mishnah, ca. 200 C.E., where the age of accountability is fixed at thirteen is in mitzvot. (Avot 5:23)

The responsibility of the parents in this respect is emphasized where they were given the authority to execute those children who are rebellious in Deuteronomy. The Talmud indicates that the stoning of the "rebellious son" was never carried out in practice.

Even though discipleship initiation is done by water baptism, Dr. B. E. Thiering argues that at Qumran, the disciple is not given permission partake of the communal feast without confirmation by another rite, after water baptism, to effect the real initiation – rather full membership. Here again water baptism adds members to the community takes in learners, but purification and full membership into the commune of Church is

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effected by being in the community where the Spirit does his work. (B. E. Thiering, "Inner and Outer Cleansing at Qumran as a Background to New Testament Baptism," *New Testament Studies*, 26 (1980), No. 2, pp. 266-277.)

Apparently the believer's baptism corresponds to the Bar-Mitzvah instead of circumcision. Notice however that Barmitzvah is optional. Whether a ceremony is conducted or not they become full participating members of the community bearing full responsibility. In the ritualistic Qumran Community however, a proper initiation must have been necessary.

Here let me reiterate the Jewish stand in this matter again. Talmudic references for these are found in Conversion with Parents: Ketuvot 11a

The conversion of an infant or child has Jewish legal sanction. According to the Talmud (Ketubot 11a), it is permissible for a religious court (a bet din) to convert a gentile infant. The basis in Jewish law is that it is a privilege to be Jewish (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah, 268:7). Therefore, a minor can be converted even though not mature enough to understand the act because making the minor Jewish is performing a favor for that infant or child. <http://www.convert.org>

Immersing the Child as part of conversion, on the Court's "Daat":

Ketuvot 11a

Child's Option of Refusing conversion upon Maturing: Ketuvot 11a

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Talmud adds that upon reaching the age of consent, (by Jewish law, 12 for a girl and 13 for a boy), the child is permitted to protest. In other words, the entire conversion is conditional. The child has the right to protest when he or she reaches the age of bar/bat mitzvah. Some rabbis formalize this, and actually ask the child upon reaching majority if he or she wishes to protest the conversion. Some rabbis even require re-immersion in a mikveh.

Thus And so the bar/bat mitzvah is a reaffirmation of a ceremony (circumcision and joining the covenant people as an 8 day old infant) performed long before.

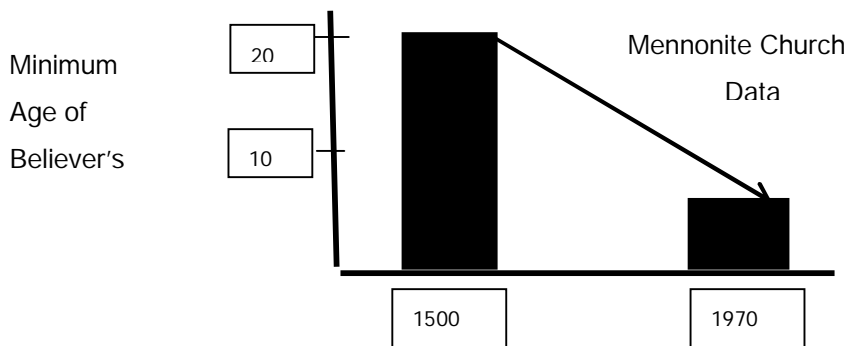
The Problem of the Age of Accountability

The problem do not cease there. Where as Barmitzvah has defined age, believers baptism people have no defined age. Yet those groups who believe in Believers baptism would have it stated as:

“Age of Accountability. We understand that there is a point reached in life at which a person becomes morally responsible to God. This age is not the same for all persons but frequently comes early in adolescence”

According to this view, children of Christian parents are viewed as "unaccountable" until they reach a certain age which cannot be defined . They are neither Christians nor are they non-Christians. They are just children who are not accountable for their sins. After they reach a certain age (no one knows what this age is) a free-will decision for Jesus alone will saves a person. All of a sudden they then change the status from "unaccountable for sins" to a "condemned sinner"

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What age is the right age or what is the level of achievement expected for this transition.? Since Bible do not define it, it remains to this day a matter of personal opinion. “First, you have not found the age of accountability in the Bible because it is not there. Scripture does, as you say, tell us that we are all born in Adam's sin, Romans 5:12-21. However, as far as an age of accountability -- like three, seven, two, or whatever - Scripture is silent. I don't see an age of accountability in Scripture.

Take the historical development of the Mennonite Church - the oldest church today holding believer's baptism. The exact point when this level is reached has been gradially getting more and more blurred. The minimum age of 20 in the 1500s have lowered in time to be 8 or even less by 1970s. Evidently this was forced upon the church

As for the first generation converts - from another religion to Christianity - a conscious decision is necessary and therefore it evidently has to be an

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adult believers baptism. (*Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, p. 53-55. Quoted from the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada). The Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia (*Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Herald Press, Scottdale, Pennsylvania, and Waterloo, Ontario) gives the following statement.

‘The estimated **average age** of baptism for 10 representative Anabaptist men and women, **1525-1536**, was **36.4**, with none under the age of 20, two between the ages of 20 and 29, four between 30 and 39, and four between 40 and 49. In **1973** the median age of baptism for four Mennonite denominations (Mennonite Church, General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren, Evangelical Mennonite Church) plus the Brethren in Christ Church was **14.9**..... The Kauffman-Harder study of five Mennonite-related denominations (1973) documented the downward trend in the age of baptism. For the oldest generation of members (over 50), it was 16.3; for the middle generation (30-49), it was 14.9; and for the youngest generation (tinder 30), it was 14.0. The median age for women (14.7) was significantly lower than for men (15.2), reflecting the fact that women reach puberty and, presumably, the age of maturity (i.e., discretion) at an earlier age than men. The spread ranged from age 8 or less at baptism (109 cases) to 40 plus years at baptism (49 cases). Thirteen percent of all members had been baptized before the age of 12. Moreover, the 1973 data revealed significant differences between the five denominations. The **median age** of baptism was lowest in the **Mennonite Church (14.0)** and highest among General Conference Mennonites and Mennonite Brethren (16.4), with the

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Evangelical Mennonite Church and Brethren in Christ (14.1 and 14.5) more like the Mennonite Church (MC) practice."

The reason for this difficulty is in the definition of the transition. Unless the exact nature of accomplishments are defined a rite of passage baptism of the believer will remain a hazy object. No one reaches the level of maturity to be sinless as long as we are in this world. If baptism is supposed to be a repentance process, we need to get baptized every day. This purification process should go on as long as we live. This is what the Hebrew mikvas represent. In the new Israel, the waters of the mikvah is still present as the rivers of water that flows from the belly of the believer. It cannot be represented by a one time immersion in water. If baptism is to represent the personal covering of "the once and for all" sacrifice of Jesus for my sin, it should not depend on my committing the sin and then the sacrifice. That is what the Old Testament animal sacrifices did.

It is interesting to note that there has been a new development within the Judaic community regarding Bar/Bat mizvah. "A recent phenomena, Adult Bar/Bar Mitzvah, has emerged. Often, these are group ceremonies following an extensive study process; they appeal to people who did not have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony when they were children, or who moved away from Jewish tradition and are now returning." ((Rabbi Amy R. Schinermann <http://ezra.mts.jhu.edu/~rabbiars/life-cycle/b-mitzvah.html>) I believe that believer's baptism also has a similar place.

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What this means is that the children of believers who are growing up within the believing community do not experience the radical conversion experience of new converts to Christianity except under extreme conditions when they are not nurtured within the Christian faith. Their experience will be one of appropriation and ownership of the faith in which they have been raised. This will simply be an acknowledgement of the faith of their fathers and nothing more. If the Church community and the family take up their responsibility and perform the disciplining of their children right from child birth, the baptism will become redundant as Believer's baptism. In other words it simply becomes a confirmation and not a conversion. At this point in their lives the baptism becomes only "a sign of their crossing-over from innocence into an owned faith" See Marlin Jeschke, *Believers' Baptism for Children of the Church* (Scottsdale, 1983) and also *Mennonite Encyclopedia*, Vol. 5, p. 53-55.

Alternative Biblical Age of Maturity

Since man has really no age of maturity or age of accountability and since every one goes on maturing as they age, the problem of age of accountability for determination of Believer's baptism will remain an enigma. Bible does not deal with it in any place. So some Churches has suggested the Old Testament rule of military service and Office bearing age as a standard. Here is one reasoning.

- Bible says children are not fully capable of distinguishing between good and evil (Deu 1.39, Isa 7.16).

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- Numbers 14.29 and Deuteronomy 1.39 establish the precedent that God will NOT hold children responsible when He brings judgment for sin.
- Numbers 14.29, a "child" is a person who is aged 19 or younger.
- CONCLUSION: Only those persons age 20 and older are held accountable for sin.

Here are some additional passages in this regard.

Israelites were counted in the census beginning at the age of 20. The first chapter of Numbers deals with the polling of the various tribes all counted from 20 years of age and over. Exodus 30:11-14: And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the LORD, ,,,, Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, **from twenty years old and above**, shall give an offering unto the LORD.

*Num 14:29: Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, **from twenty years old and upward**, which have murmured against me*

*Deu 1:39: Moreover your **little ones**, which ye said should be a prey, **and your children**, which in that day **had no knowledge between good and evil**, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.*

This is taken to mean that under the age of 20 children has no knowledge of good and evil and so they are not under condemnation. **We only need**

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to direct our gospel messages to those above 20 when they are able to distinguish between good and evil.

"Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me," (Num. 14:29).

Military Service Began at 20

"From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: you and Aaron shall number them by their armies." (Num. 1:3)

but this age was lowered to 20 by David:

"For by the last words of David the Levites [were] numbered from twenty years old and above:" (1Chron. 23:27).

Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of Yahweh." (Ezra 3:8)

They then were mature enough to marry and established their own families apart from the parents. (Num. 1:18)

Levites began duties at 30

Numbers 4:1-3 shows that the Levites initially began duties at age 30, but the age was evidently lowered to 20 by King David (1Chron. 23:24-26)

According to this doctrine sins committed upto the age of 20 are not counted at all.

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The point is that we have no biblical standard for such an age when a child become accountable. If we apply the same standard you will not be accountable for your sins after the age of 60. Levitical services and Military services of men in Israel ended with the age of 60 and they were free from taxes.

"And your estimation shall be of the male from twenty years old even unto sixty years old, even your estimation shall be fifty shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary." (Lev. 27:3)

A simple perusal will indicate that these are not really referring to age of accountability for the personal sins but ability to serve or go into war. Baptism is not meant to be BarMitzah or voting age or taxable age or age for going to war to age of appointment towards temple service. These arguments are simply attempts to find an age of accountability towards sin where the scripture do not warrant one.

Christianity is a relation with Christ.

Apart from the hairsplitting arguments and search for age of accountability, the basic error is based on the misunderstanding of what Christianity is. Is Christianity essentially an acknowledgement of doctrine and intellectual assent? If so we need to wait until the intellectual faculty is developed to take in those teachings. You cannot teach Calculus unless the student have taken Pre-Calculus algebra. However the uniqueness of Christianity is that it is personal relationship between the person and Christ. Then even infants have the ability to have relationships. Don't they development relation with the Father and Mother. Thus basically every infant is capable of developing

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relationship with Christ from their birth. There is no age when they are not ready for it. This is the reason why we don't have a single adult or believer's baptism in the scripture among the children of the Christians. From 30 AD to 80 or 100 AD during the Apostolic Period there were children born to the believers. There is not one single incidence of adult baptism of believing parents found in the scripture or in the first and second century history. True no such direct description for infant baptism is also found. But certainly there are indirect references for household baptisms and lots of first and second century reference for it.

The point is that even an infant is ready for relationship with Christ and it is the duty of every Christian parent to get their child into that relationship right from the birth. It is not a one time event or act, but an on going process. No wonder we cannot find the age fit for this lasting relationship with the saviour.

Jordan Bajis of Greek Orthodox Church summarizes his arguments in the following section: <http://www.goarch.org/>

“Many times the debate regarding infant baptism is a defensive one; those who propose that adult baptism is the only valid form challenge those who practice infant baptism to prove that it is an acceptable practice. What if those who exclusively favor adult baptism were interrogated? What answers would they give to questions which up until now have been virtually unaddressed? Questions such as these:

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- If infant baptism is a later invention, when did it begin and who began it? Where did it originate?
- Why are there no protests against the validity of infant baptism from anyone in the early Church?
- Where is anything found in Scripture that expressly forbids the baptism of infants or children?
- How is it that God established a covenantal, corporate relationship with the tribes of Israel in the Old Testament, but you interpret the New Testament as abolishing the faith of an entire household with the father at its head in favor of a solely individualistic faith?
- Where does Scripture prescribe any age for baptism?
- Even if there were a special age when someone's faith reached "maturity," how could one discern that? Doesn't faith always mature? When is faith mature enough for baptism and when is it not? Who can judge?
- Where in Scripture does it say that children are free from the effects of the Fall simply because they are not old enough to believe? (Even creation is under the curse of mankind's fall - Romans 8:19-21).
- What about the many Biblical meanings and early Christian understandings of baptism other than the one defining it as a visible sign of inward repentance, meanings such as the sacrament of regeneration (Titus 3:5), a grafting into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13), a passage from the reign of Satan

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into Christ's authority (Romans 6:17), the expression of the manifestation of God (Luke 3:21,22), an admission into God's covenant (Colossians 2:11), the Lord's act of adoption and our putting on of Christ (Galatians 3:26,27)? Why should these things be taken away from the small child of a Christian family?

- If it was the norm to baptize children at a later age, why is there no evidence in Scripture or early Church history of instruction given to parents on how to help their adolescent children prepare for baptism?
- If it is granted that baptism is for the remission of sins, why would the Church ever want to give baptism to infants if there were nothing in the infants which needed remission? Would not the grace of baptism, in this context, seem superfluous?
- In essence, laying aside all the polemics and prejudices and academic intricacies, what Scriptural principle is being violated if a child is baptized and matures in his faith?

There is a good reason why these questions are hard to answer for those who exclusively advocate adult baptism: infant baptism is not an innovation, it is the practice of the Early Church.”

The Loss of Unbaptized Persons.

There is a much more serious concern that arises from the attenuation and loss of persons when baptism is postponed or rejected. This is the problem of seepage from the churches as a result of the ineffective

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nurture and evangelism of children and the inept transmission of a meaningful self-identity. This is also emphasized in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* discussion on the subject.

“The decennial census of members, children, and ex-members of the General Conference Mennonite Church reveals some startling statistics in this regard. From 1960 to 1970, a total of 17,530 people were received into membership in 222 reporting churches, 51 percent by baptism (mostly teenagers), 43 percent by transfer from another church, and 5 percent by reaffirmation of faith. During the same decade 15,956 memberships were terminated by death, transfer, or deletion from membership roles. Thus, the ratio of receptions to losses was a bare 1.1. Only 45 percent of the children between the ages of 15 and 19 had been baptized; and about one-fifth of the children over 20 years of age had still not been baptized and received as members. In the Conference of Mennonites in British Columbia, only 28 percent of the children aged 15-19 had been baptized,..... Moreover, there was a much greater seepage of men than of women. In the British Columbia provincial conference, only 36 percent of the male children (aged 20-24) of members had ever been baptized, compared to 69 percent of the women. Among General Conference Mennonites as a whole, it appears that about 15 percent of the offspring of members are never baptized and are thus lost to the General Conference Mennonite Church, if not to the wider Christian church.”

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Evidently the antipathy to baptising children into the Church and initiating a lasting relation with Christ right from infancy causes a large number of children to wander away. Have you not given them the freedom of choice?

Marriage and Baptism

There is a great similarity between Marriage and Baptism. In the Eastern Churches, the marriage ceremony is considered as a symbol of the covenant between God and his church which is reflected in the marriage ceremony performed. So marriage is also a seal and symbol of the New Covenant – covenant between Jesus and His bride the Church. Now Baptism is also the symbol and the seal of the covenant of the New Covenant. In this we could say that the person is baptized or married into the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. This is a marriage into a family and to a person as in the case of actual marriage.

Now we have the huge problem of arranged marriage and personal (choosing by one person) marriage in our society. In ancient world, marriages were always arranged between two families after prolonged scrutiny of each family's record and faithfulness. In many cases marriages were arranged even before the boy and girl reached maturity. According to the Jewish traditions of the times of Jesus, they were betrothed and joined together when they became mature. This is seen in the arrangement of Joseph and Mary, the parents of Jesus. In these cases they grew together and learned to love and formed the family when they

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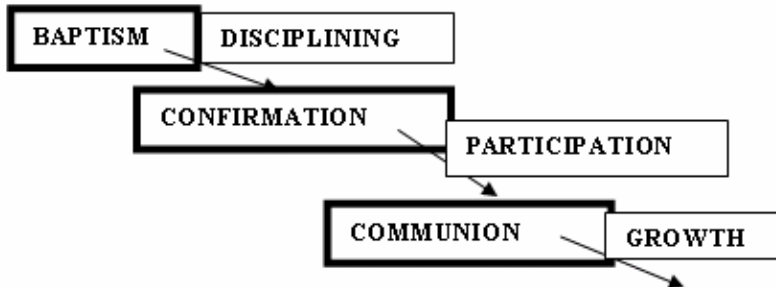
were old enough. However they could simply decide to go separate if they thought it will not work. (Joseph wanted to do that secretly) In contrast, this method is today frowned upon on the basis of personal choice and freedom. It is assumed that the choice of our parents cannot be right. We quote the chemistry objection. Without going into the merits and demerits of the two systems, I just want to point out the similarity between the personalised adult marriage as to the believer's baptism as compared to child betrothal as to infant baptism. In the case of baptism the betrothed is Jesus. Do you want your child to meet him and fall in love among many other eligible gods and then marry or would you rather choose Jesus as your child's betrothed? Which of these have a greater chance of success in getting your child married to Jesus? Do you think that you will be making a mistake in taking Jesus as the future husband for your child? The argument goes on.. I refuse to take sides in this matter of marriage.

Baptism, Confirmation, and Full Communion.

Following this tradition, Confirmation, Reception and Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows are essentially encoded in all Christian traditions. The idea is that Baptism, Confirmation and Communion are not in themselves an end. They are only the means of salvation. This is a route. They also come in that order so that growing in communion with Jesus and the Church we may attain redemption and salvation. The salvificatory power does not lie in the ritual itself but in the process that

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if carried through would take us to the destination – which is being transformed in the image of HIS SON.



Baptism and Confirmation are here considered as rites of transition. The on going communion of fellowship is the means of growth through interaction. Finally the participation in the Holy Communion act as a rite of intensification at intervals. Thus the first two are administered once in life time and the other rituals and rites are a continuing repeated process.

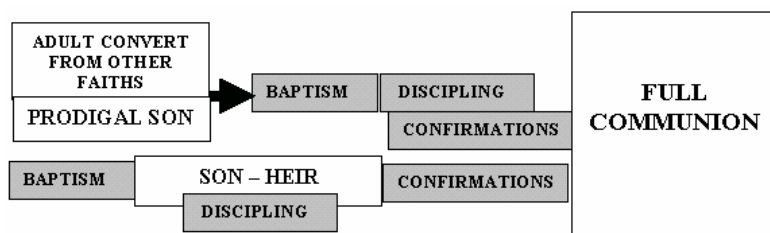
The rite of confirmation is probably of later origin as there is no mention of it in the Bible. It was prevalent in the Churches of Pauline origin and fits well with Paul's theology of salvation which emphasizes the confession with the mouth.

Rom 10:9 because, if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Rom 10:10 For man believes with his heart and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.

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Thus while the order is binding for the children baptized as infants as it gives them the freedom to repudiate the decision made by the parents, it will lose its significance if they were baptized as adults. In that case they have confirmed the choice by their own volition. The order itself is immaterial in that case. Baptism itself is the confirmation. This is the believer's baptism. Whether discipling and instruction should precede baptism or proceed from baptism is also immaterial, but it should start before or soon after. Since growth is an on going process, it never ends. Since this is the work of the Holy Spirit it does not have a beginning either.



If these are taken as independent isolated rituals apart from the person's relationship with Christ and their growth in Christian faith, they lose their meaning. The significance of the rituals themselves has to be imposed on mystically and externally, as they are then an end in itself. This is the stand of the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostal Churches. Both these churches give some sort of mystical power for the external act of baptism.

These steps have been condensed into one - without the discipling period - in the Roman Catholic Church and in some Orthodox Churches.

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Yet in all liturgy of the Church there is a statement, "Let us now pray for these persons who have renewed their commitment to Christ", indicating the true dogma. This combining several steps into one must have come into existence due to pressure of population. There may have been other historical reasons for it.

Church in the third and fourth century certainly followed the sequence with proper gaps. Eastern Churches had followed this tradition to this day, though the age when these be done is not defined. Hence most churches followed their own timings. Reformed churches insist on these being separate events and confirmation can only be after the age of 13 following the Jewish tradition. We should not be surprised to see a spectrum of ritual modes and spectrum of arrangements in the series of rituals through history. This is simply because the rituals themselves were simply a means to bringing people to faith and ultimate salvation.

Rev. Dr. R.D. Crouse in his article on "BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION AND HOLY COMMUNION" quotes John Cosin a 17th century Bishop of Durham:

... "The ancient fathers and bishops of the Church everywhere, in their learned, Godly, and Christian writings impute unto (Confirmation) those gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost which doth not make men and women Christians, as they were at first in their baptism, but when they are made such there, assisteth them in all virtue, and armeth them the better against all the several temptations of the world, and the devil, to resist

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the vices of the flesh. When Baptism was at first administered to them of full age who in their infancy were either Jews, or heathen, there was no reason to sever Confirmation from it. But when it was administered to infants (as it was to you), though they might very well be admitted to live in the family of Christ (as you have been), yet for as much as to fight in the Army of God, and to discharge the duties of a Christian man or woman, to bring forth the fruits of their religion and to do the works of the Holy Ghost, their time of ability was not yet come, their Confirmation was deferred till they arrived to riper years (as yours now is), that in the meantime they might be seasoned with the principles of true religion (as we hope well you now are), and a good foundation laid betimes for the better direction of your lives ever after."

http://www.prayerbook.ca/crouse/writings/baptism_1.htm

Even the Roman Catholics have come to realize the usefulness of the order and seperation as seen in the reintroduction of these in many dioceses.

(see: Baptism, Confirmation, and First Communion by Martin J. Albrecht
<http://www.wls.wels.net/library/Essays/Authors/A/Albrecht/Confirmation/Albrecht Confirmation.rtf>)

Martin Luther's Historical Arguments for Infant Baptism

(For a short summary of Martin Luther's other arguments see this summary by Duerr)

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Fruitful Church Argument

The presence in the world of millions of fruitful witnesses who were baptized as infants is proof that God approves of infant Baptism and works favorably and powerfully through it. If He opposed infant Baptism, the church would be accursed and unfruitful, for God opposes that which is not of truth. The present strength of the visible church is thus proof that infant Baptism bestows the gift of the Holy Spirit to its recipients (Acts 2:28), and they are made fruitful by the Spirit's work.

Traditional Argument

Infant Baptism has been the practice of the church since its inception, according to St. Augustine and other early church fathers. There is no reason to think that infants were not baptized in good faith by the apostles. Only if Scripture opposed a church practice could it be overturned, and this can be done.

Heresy Suppression Argument

All church heresies have been confronted very soon after introduction. Paul mentioned the heresies of Jannes and Jambres; these were immediately challenged and overruled by church theologians (2 Timothy 3:8-9). The lack of any such challenge to infant Baptism until the 1520's is circumstantial proof that no error existed.

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Absent Church Argument

Now if God did not accept the Baptism of infants, he would not have given any of them the Holy Spirit nor any part of him; in short, all this time down to the present day no man on earth could have been a Christian. Since God has confirmed infant baptism through the gift of the Holy Spirit. . . must admit that infant Baptism is pleasing to God. For he can never be in conflict with himself support lies and wickedness, or give his grace and spirit for such ends. (Tappert: Book of Concord, [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959] pp. 442-3).

The church can not exist without Baptism; without it the church would have ceased. If infant Baptism was invalid, then the church did not baptize anyone for more than one hundred years. This would imply that no church existed for over a millennium.

Baptism of Adult Converts

If however the person who comes to Christ only as an adult then a traumatic baptism method becomes necessary. These group includes those people who come to faith from other religions. In an adult conversion who come from either a different belief system or from a deviated living pattern which we call “sinner” status; the conversion is to be traumatic and must be an ordeal. The more expressive and traumatic the better will be its effect.

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Rites of passage generally consist of three stages, originally outlined by van Gennep:

- (1) Separation of the individuals from their preceding social state (Destabilization);
- (2) A period of transition in which they are neither one thing nor the other (Disorientation); and
- (3) An integration phase, (Reorientation) in which, through various rites of incorporation, they are absorbed into their new social state.

In many initiation rites involving major transitions into new social roles (such as military basic training), ritualized physical and mental hardships serve to break down initiates' belief systems, leaving them open to new learning and the construction of new cognitive categories. This is a once in a lifetime act whereby the society accepts the persons new status in society.

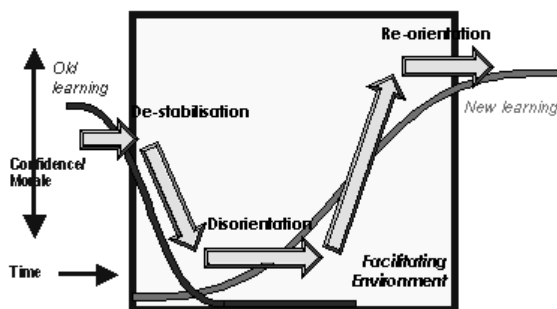
James S Atherton [ATHERTON J S (2003) *Doceo: Learning as Loss I* [On-line] UK: Available:

http://www.doceo.co.uk/original/learnloss_1.htm Accessed: 18 April 2004] presents the conversion as supplantive learning compares the conversion as follows

	De-stabilisation	Disorientation	Re-orientation
New Testament	Conviction/ confession	Repentance	New birth
Lewin (1945)	Unfreezing	Change	Re-freezing
Lifton (1961)	Confrontation	Re-ordering	Renewal
Mezirow (1978)	Alienation	Re-framing	Contractual solidarity

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Adult conversion requires all these three different stages. Atherton gives a graphic representation of the process as follows:



We can see here the reason why Jesus called this change a New Birth. We can also see why Paul called this process a Death and Resurrection with Christ. It needs a *removal* of Old Belief System and its total *erasing* and then *relearning*. The relearning process is enhanced with the intense field in which the disoriented, melted is placed.

However if the person comes from the same belief system and was brought up with the same belief system, there will be no need of the first two steps. It is no more a relearning process but a re-inforcing process. Thus there is no need of a traumatic experience or death process involved. That is what makes the covenant children different from those coming from outside. When you move from one church to another if there is a substantial difference in the basic tenants, a conversion process will again be necessary. That is why most extreme sects within the

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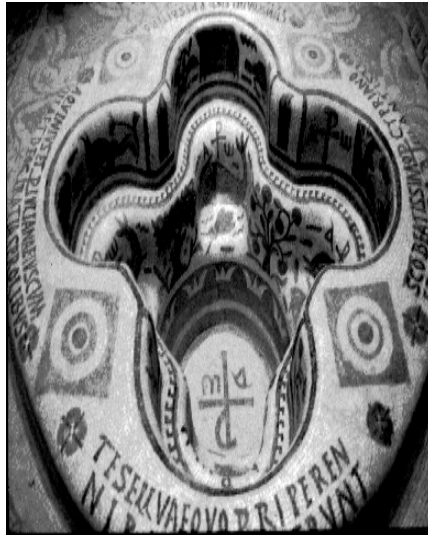
Christian Church insists on their own mode of baptism and other initiation rituals.

These symbolism are marked in many of the early baptismal fonts where a deep step down leads to a narrow pool of water at the bottom where the catechumen walk down and are baptized and then come up. It is the walking in and out of the depths of the earth that gives the renewal symbolism rather than the water itself. As an example here is a font found in early Ephesus



The Baptistery in Ephesus

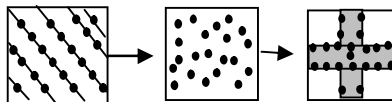
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The baptisteries in Tunisia - one at Sbeitla and the one in Kelibia
ememplifies this principle in great detail.

*Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not
your own doing, it is the gift of God—*

Lewin uses the physical analogy of the material being unfrozen,
processed and then refrozen in the new state which is very similar to the
concept of metalurgical analogy of greek “baptizo”



CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSIONS

Baptism is neither necessary nor sufficient condition for salvation. Baptism is neither necessary nor sufficient condition for the infilling of the Holy spirit.

It is a rite of initiation into discipleship to Jesus Christ and to the family we call church. It is sign and a seal of the new covenant. It is a mark which says this person belongs to Christ. It is an acted out prayer by the community- the family we call Church.

It has spiritual meaning and impact to the receiver in his own interpretation but it is not magic beyond the magic of faith. It is a witness and testimony to the church and to the world. Such open statement of faith is often necessary for the growth of person into Christian maturity and saves him from the sinful world.

Child baptism has no meaning to the child when he or she is baptized. It can have positive or negative meaning (bring salvation or condemnation) when he or she desires at any time when he or she matures. It is therefore equivalent to a call for salvation from the parents. It is a public

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announcement by the parents that they will disciple their child in the way of Jesus. After all baptism is not a magic formula. The person may accept the parent's altar call offer and be saved or reject and be condemned. It is a prayer said in faith claiming the child's redemption by the parents. We rely on God's grace to work in the life of the children while they are still innocent and able to understand the love of God. The church is bound by the election to bring the children into the knowledge and nurture of the faith in Jesus. It has meaning for the community in realizing the child's new position. In this it is an initiation rite. In baptizing the infant the church as a whole and especially the parents and the God parents commit themselves as evangelists to the child vowing to make them disciples in the name of the Lord. In an era of individualism and emphasis on personal responsibilities this idea of disciplining a child into the "faith that was handed down to our fathers once and for all" has lost its meaning. The neglect of child baptism is the product of modern individualism and freedom of person.

Bible does not define any specific mode of baptism. Only indication is that it involved water. History or practice does not support total immersion only as a form of baptism ever. Jesus was not baptized by total immersion – at least in the way we find it today. Historically total immersion is a product of Anabaptist period. I personally believe that if the external modes and order etc were so important for our salvation, Our Lord would never have left them so vague and undefined. In most cases water baptism is not considered as "the baptism" at all. It is only a visible sign connected to particular local church "as a proof to the people".

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If baptism is symbol and a seal or an initiation into discipleship, we may use any culturally interpretable symbol. What Anunayanam - symbol of the sacred of thread – as used by Brahmins has all the meanings of it. We could use many other permanent visible symbols which could remain as a constant reminder of our commitment (as the circumcision did) like a ring or cross or special robe etc. These are much better because they also provide intensification by constant reminder. Sikhs have five marks why don't we use some similar method? Salvation Army in the concept of an Army discipline uses the flag ceremony as baptism.

If we want to change, What is your suggestion?

Is there anything wrong in getting baptized again, if you were baptized as an infant?

Nothing. It can be interpreted as a statement that ‘the faith of our fathers were not good enough.’ That is why the Nicene creed is interpreted today literally as "Baptism indicating the remission of sin is to be once only" as a rite of passage. But if it is required to confirm your faith and assurance of salvation there is nothing lost in rebaptism. Repeated baptism at every stage of growth as a "rite of transition" is a culturally acceptable method. After all the Jewish Priests “baptized” several times even during the day as a rite of purification. In the modern culture where families fall apart, reaffirmation of marriage contract as a full marriage ceremony is rampant. Following this reasoning, if you need to renew your covenant with God every now and then, there is nothing wrong in

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rebaptism. Baptism was actually ordained as a rite of initiation. Communion Table is a rite of Intensification (similar to the festivals and sacrifices of the Old Testament). There were rites of transitions which required elaborate baptisms (of immersion, washing, sprinkling, anointing etc.) which the churches uses whenever a transition occurs like the ordination of elders, deacons and pastors etc. Why do we want to use baptism? But why not? If it helps to save – praise God – let us do it.

Most traditional churches that confess the Nicene Creed however will not accept you. (However the declaration "I believe in one baptism" was the result of the Roman Period when a person under persecution left the church and later wanted to come back into the church. The question then was whether they should be rebaptised or not. The decision of the Nicean council was that this is unnecessary. In that sense it is not really a prohibition of a second baptism) You may be alienated from your church. But some people really need it. They really need the personal assertion and statement through a more exhibitionistic baptism. The more ceremonial better. They cannot rely on the word, they need something visible especially if they were on the wrong path all or most of their lives. Prodigal Son needed the washing and the ring.

Luke 15:31-32 " 'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' "

But there are others who were born in a Christian home, brought up in Christian heritage and faith that they have no specific event called

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second birth. They must have erred away from their father's faith. But returned to it with renewed strength based on life experience and evidences. A baptism do not harm them, but it has no relevance to them. Such erring and return are common in every believer's life. If we are to follow the Jewish tradition, mikvah was a daily routine ritual purification for them as in the Indian Brahminical tradition. One goes through the ritual immersion every day; probably more than once every day. Mikvah here simply denotes baptism of repentance. Each repentance is also a change of status from impure to pure. What I am trying to point out is that it will be stretching the point too far to require a baptism every day. In fact repentance and renewal and change of status in life should be an everyday experience in the spiritual life of the believer. The question is whether we need to do it by a visible symbolic water baptism, whether immersion or sprinkling? We are instructed to walk by faith and not by sight. I am not against use of visible symbols. They are indeed powerful in internalizing and transmitting deep spiritual messages. I would certainly employ them if it brings about Christian growth.

Some churches requires that every member be baptized by total immersion. It is a condition for membership. Each church has their own conditions for membership. If you want to be a member of that church, you better follow the rules of that church. It should not be tied with salvation. I don't think one of the questions at the immigration counter by Peter at the pearly gate include "Are you baptized?" It certainly include, "Do you believe in Jesus?"

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Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?

But any baptism undertaken to absolve one from sin and bring in salvation is utterly non-christian. Baptism do not absolve anyone from sin, nor does it save. It is faith in Christ Jesus that saves. If you are planning to get baptized as a follower of the “Law” of baptism; the anathema of Paul will stand.

Gal 2:19-21 For I through the law died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose.

Gal 3:3 Are you so foolish? Having begun with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?

*Gal 3:26-27 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were **baptized into Christ** have put on Christ.*

Remember, Gospel of Paul did not include Baptism. Whether the Law is Mosaic or Church they are all same. In taking such a step you will be nullifying your salvation through faith in Christ. The question is “Are you baptized into Christ or Are you baptized in water? Any legal insistence on nature, mode or time of baptism as a dogma brings in condemnation and not salvation. But once you are saved and are baptized into Christ by the baptism by Christ then you want to shout it from the mountain top. May be you want to do Seershasana - stand head

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down and leg up - on the mountain top to bring that to the attention of the world. Good.

Should we baptize our children? If we are baptizing infants with the thought that they are saved by that, the same anaethema of Paul stand. We may dedicate our children and they can then take adult baptism when they are old enough or we can give them baptism now as a sign of membership into the church and they can claim the baptism as theirs as they grow up - a confirmation. (They can repudiate it if they want to.) In the first case you are throwing the ball to the child. In the latter you affirm your faith in his salvation and act in faith. You have announced that you will discipline your child in the way of the Lord. In the former you do not take any responsibility of disciplining or teaching the child and leave it to your child entirely. The child will remain an alien to the church community until he is baptized. The choice is totally yours. You can use baptism as an initiation or as an intensification rite. This decides the age of baptism. In both cases the actual mode and form and wording are of no real consequence. These symbols get their meaning from association and has no meaning in themselves. It may even vary from culture to culture.

In all these external rituals – including going to church and going through the ceremonies – we ask this question. Does this edify? Does this cause growth in Christian life? All these external rituals of the church will remain meaningless unless it can create an environment whereby we can bring our children into faith.

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Rom 15:1-2 We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him.

Eph 4:12-16 equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

Eph 4:22 -24 Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

CHAPTER TWELVE
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF BAPTISM
AND
REDISCOVERY OF GREAT COMMISSION

Every ritual within any religion has always two components. There is an ongoing evolution of the form of the ritual as the culture changes. The images and the symbolic meanings change with the variations in culture, language, social setup, political set up etc. There are also the changes in the understanding of the symbol and ritual in terms of faith.

The same is true regarding baptism. There had been changes in the modes of baptism from pre-Christian period to the twenty-first century. There also had been changes in the understanding of what the ritual stands for and in the prophetic interpretation of the symbol in spiritual level and its interpretation in terms of contemporary understanding of God, justification, sanctification, nature of man, redemption etc.

Rituals were normal part all religions. It has been always a way of living. In fact all religions try to penetrate deep into the daily living, giving it a meaning beyond the mundane. Temples were always the center of the

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community. It ought to be. Daily ablutionary rites were common among all religions. The author of Hebrews refers to these as Doctrines of baptisms, which according to the writer were prophetic indications of redemption through Christ. Bodily cleanliness is indicative of spiritual cleanliness. It is a symbol. God must be approached with a clean body. Hence baths ritualized as baptisms were ordained. A direct equivalence can be found between the Hebrew and Hindu ablutions and its relation to worship.

These ablutions were always taken to change the status of a person from unclean to clean or from impure to pure. Thus priests in all religions took elaborate baths and made prayers before entering the sanctum. Even common people followed similar ritual baths before going to worship. Worshipping with wet clothes or in water up to their waist came to be a form of repentance and prayachitta – penitence. Quaran speaks of Eve standing in the river with water up to her waist for days in repentance for her disobedience. The tradition can be found still among the Hindu women. It has remained with Christians in added vigor with "Sunday best".

Initiation into the religion of the fathers was always performed within the first few days.

Initiation expresses what the community believes about its identity and sense of belonging. To comprehend the meaning of initiation rites of a

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given historical period, the faith understanding of that period must be examined. History provides the facts; theology interprets those facts with a faith understanding. Therefore, this overview will present the historical development of the rite of baptism as well as the Church's faith understanding about that sacrament.

Every religious ritual has three dimensions.

The mundane material dimension is the actual external rite.

Then we have the spiritual dimension, which is not visible, but is assumed to be the more real act. The material is the reflection or image of the spiritual.

Then we have the ultimate fulfillment of the ritual, where the physical and spiritual meet and becomes the reality.

When we emphasize one interpretation over the other, we get confused over what the ritual actually is and what it means. Let us make sure that these do not mix. They are distinct from each other, yet one in essence.

Baptism has these dimensions:

* Physical: The physical immersion, washing, sprinkling or pouring of water.

** Spiritual: Repentance, New Birth – Born in the Spirit, Purification, Baptism with the Holy Spirit.

** Final Fulfillment: Resurrection of the Body, recreated in the image of God.

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The spiritual follows the Physical and then comes the fulfillment.

1 Cor 15: 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. 48 As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. 49 And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

The Jewish practice of circumcision and water baptism was the established initiation rites expressing incorporation and purification. Circumcision was the means of initiation into Old Covenant. Cutting the flesh was not a new method of initiation. Tribes in Africa still cut their faces to produce a scar, which distinguish one tribe from the other. This was indeed important during the war. How will they know friends from the foes? Circumcision however was unique in that it cannot be seen unless a person is undressed indicating that the circumcision is of the heart. This was what Moses and the prophets emphasized.

Moses said Deut. 30: 6 *The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.*

Jer. 4: 3 This is what the LORD says to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem: "Break up your unplowed ground and do not sow among thorns. 4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, circumcise your hearts,

Rom. 2: 29 No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

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Closely associated with baptism was Anointing with Oil. This was also a means of consecration as water baptism was. Anointing with oil was used for consecration of priests as in:

Ex. 29: 5-8 Take the garments and dress Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod itself and the breastpiece. Fasten the ephod on him by its skillfully woven waistband. Put the turban on his head and attach the sacred diadem to the turban. Take the anointing oil and anoint him by pouring it on his head. Bring his sons and dress them in tunics and put headbands on them. Then tie sashes on Aaron and his sons. The priesthood is theirs by a lasting ordinance. In this way you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

For the consecration of kings as in:

Anointing of David by Samuel:

*1 Sam 16:12 Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."
13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.*

Anointing of Nimshi by Elijah:

*1 Ki. 19: 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.
2 Ki 9: 6 Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the prophet (Elisha) poured the oil on Jehu's head and declared, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anoint you king over the Lord's people Israel.*

The above verse also indicates that anointing with oil was also used in the consecration of Prophets.

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The traditional way of anointing with oil was pouring oil from a Ram Horn over the head of the anointed so that it flowed from his head all over as a covering like a raiment.

By the time of exodus proselytes were given the baptism by allowing the catechumen enter into a large gathering of water (mikvah) to the level of his naval. Some modern Jewish groups insists on baptism by squatting preliminary to the circumcision. In this ritual, the proselyte was asked to enter a flowing stream of water and squat down and immerse himself with his eye lids fluttering and fingers and toes twisting concentrating on God. This was witnessed by at least two elders who vouched for the proper baptism ritual. The catechumen is then considered as newly born and is given the circumcision after eight days.

In the Essene Way, baptism was a central concept in terms of holiness. They were essentially a Yvhist cult. They looked forward to the coming of the Righteous one and foretold prophetically about the suffering and crucifixion of the messiah. I assume that this has caused a change in the ritual of baptism as practiced by the Essenes – at least in certain groups of Essenes. Their baptism was not by immersion. The catechumen entered the flowing water to waist deep and another person poured water over him and took him as his disciple. This is was an anointing or consecration into discipleship. The method therefore combined both the water baptism as well as anointing. They were entering into a new community where each one was a priest, prophet and a king. The water

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represented the repentance and pouring represented new clothing. There is strong evidence that John the Baptist and Jesus were involved in this group. John's baptism therefore followed this method. This is certainly relevant because John's message was that the "Kingdom of God is at hand". He was making way for the messiah and his baptism therefore followed the traditional Essenic ritual. John the Baptist introduced from Judaic and Essenic traditions, the baptism of repentance leading to the forgiveness of sins and preparation for the coming messianic age. This he did by disciplining them and teaching them. The modern disciples of John, the Mandaens follow this mode of baptism. They also follow rigid ablutionary practices as of the Pharisees. It is probable that there were other sects within the Essenic tradition with other forms of baptism. It would be presumptive to assert that there was only one scriptural form. Early church must have borrowed freely from these forms. They probably did not give much thought about the "legality of the mode".

When Jesus appeared before John, the baptism took the meaning of anointing to be prophet, priest and king to fulfil the mosaic regulation – to fulfil all righteousness. Jesus was indeed a prophet, a priest and the rightful heir to the throne of David. So the baptism was the legal consecration of these positions. There was this element of forgiveness of sin, which bothers many Christians when it comes to Jesus. We need to differentiate between personal sins and sins that we bear for being in the society. Every member of the human society bears the responsibility of all evil that perpetuates in human society. Jesus was bore this as a human

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and carried this to the cross. It was the struggle against these that led Jesus to the Cross. Every Christian is expected to bear this cross unto death.

Jesus used the word baptism only in reference to his suffering, death and resurrection. Baptism for Jesus meant Cross-. Any Christian baptism that does not bear this symbolism is not real baptism as seen by Jesus. Christian baptism is also a statement of resurrection and newness of life, clothing with righteousness etc. The early Church used baptism to express one's faith conversion and rebirth-recreation into the Body of Christ.

During the initial Apostolic Period, greater emphasis was placed on adult conversion/initiation. But Jewish regulations did agree to the conversion of the infants and minors even without their consent by proper immersion. The concept was that minors are brought up within the faith of the head of the family. They were permitted to repudiate it when they reach the age of maturity, which were 13 in the Jewish tradition. Religion was always a matter of family and not individual. Deities were always family deities – Kula Daivam. In fact the Yahvite tradition was that God was the God of Israel, not of the individuals, not even of families. We see this picture in the story of Jacob and Laban. Rachel stole the family idols. Each family in the period judges had their own Puja rooms with their own pujarees – either of Levitical tribe or elsewhere. Individuals can choose to go to a specific god for specific purposes. These are

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Sadhanas, personal choices for special specific reasons. By the time of Jesus these idols and personal deities were angels. The book of Hebrews takes up the matter and shows how Jesus is much greater than angel.

The concept of what is the unit of mankind has undergone drastic change. These old concepts still linger in our thoughts and actions. The early unit was the nation. People still think of a nation as Hindu, Christian or Muslim. Early in history only one religion was permitted within the nation. All those who disagreed over their god were considered as lower class. They were taxed heavily or treated as servants and slaves. The normal laws governing the nation will not be binding on them. The vestige of this can be seen in most Islamic nations today. Old Testament also bears testimony to this difference. As an example a Hebrew brother will get his freedom from slavery after serving seven years while others do not. Hence when God ordered Israel to take possession of the land they were told to destroy all local people. One Empire, One Faith was the theme of Roman Empire Later the unit became the tribes. Later it became the household. The household included husband wife, but any parents, children and their families and slaves and their families. The disintegration of the household led to the nuclear family units including only the husband, wife and children who are not married. Further disintegration during this generation has limited it to couples or even to individuals. When the head of the unit accepts a religion, it was normally considered the religion of the unit as a whole. Yvh was the God of Israel the whole twelve tribes of Israel. If any man

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married outside of Israel the girl left her religion and took up the religion of the husband. The problem of inter religious marriage is still the same. This unit of society concept is reflected in baptism also. In the early church, when the head of the household was converted to Christian faith, the entire household was baptized. The whole family was later given instruction into the faith and was confirmed. Although all members of the household were baptized, not all were given the full membership of the Church. Only those who were confirmed was given the privilege of joining the table or could take up offices. Whatever be the controversy about baptism be it was always understood that confirmation was by the laying on of hands. As society became fragmented because of individualism, the unit became individuals. Even within a marriage, it is not unusual to find the husband and wife practicing totally different religions. This was never acceptable within the household norm. It was the usual practice in all countries to excommunicate such people from the society. In Islamic nations this is still practiced. In fact they were tried as heretics and executed appropriately. During the reformation period both the Catholic and the Protestant Churches did the same thing. Early Church living in the period when "household was the unit", invariably used the household as their unit and baptized the entire household as is reported in the Acts of Apostles. Wrangling over whether they contained infants or not is just splitting hair over the issue. Even in places where it is not mentioned explicitly it is understood as such in context. This is because the early church understood baptism not as a rite of full membership but as an initiation.

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This was supported by the concept that this was the New Covenant, which was the spiritual part of the Old Covenant. Just as Old Covenant symbol of circumcision was given to the entire household, the symbol of New Covenant also was given to the entire household.

Acts of Apostles do not give us any instance where the catechumens were given any period of instruction apart from the first message of salvation. However during the later period a short period of preparation was probably introduced to avoid infiltration of spies into the Church during the intense persecution period that followed. By the time of Hippolytus (c. AD 170-236) an elaborate system of probation for catechumens had been invented, as expressed in the Apostolic Tradition [Latin edition by E. Hauler, Leipzig, 1900], Gregory Dix, ed., (London: SPCK, 1937).

Full membership was conferred at all times by the laying on of hands after the Church was sure of the standing of the individual. Even today our liturgy reflects this aspect. The first part of the Sunday worship (today called the First Part: 'Liturgy of the Word') was open to all. It starts with adoration, prayers, supplications, reading of the Word and ends with offering and the Ministry of the Word. Following this portion of the service they were dismissed while fully initiated members remained to celebrate the Eucharist.

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As for the formal form of baptism, early Jewish Christians must have simply continued the baptism, which the Apostles were giving during the ministry of Jesus before the cross and resurrection. That is the only way we can understand the casual order of Great commission. Jesus never instituted baptism. Jesus himself followed the John's mode of disciplining and we see a direct comparison between the two in John's gospel. We are told that Jesus was baptizing more disciples than John. The number of disciples was the only difference. Initially the Way was restricted to Jews and therefore they already had the circumcision. When the gentiles joined the Way, the question arose whether they were to have circumcision and water baptism. Since Christianity was considered as Jewish cult, early Christians demanded the gentiles to become Jews and then receive the baptism into the way. Hence we should suppose that the baptism given was identical in nature to conversion baptism or variation in accordance with messianic perspective. It was at the council of Jerusalem the Christian community came to the realization that the church was universal and the Way was not just another Jewish cult. Baptism took a new meaning. It would be a simplification to say that baptism was always performed in exactly same way because now both the Jewish traditions, Essene traditions and the gentile traditions contributed to the forms. I should expect that different modes were used appropriate to the occasion. The Way was not ritualistic. "For freedom Christ has set you free" was the constant reminder and its corresponding inner transformations and experience replaced the outward rituals. The flesh was of no avail. I should expect that baptism was performed,

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standing, squatting, immersing, pouring, sprinkling or even without water with hand. The mode was secondary. However it is unlikely that immersing backward was ever employed in any baptism – Christian, Jewish or Gentile. – until the 1500s. Making disciples was the purpose. Whether they were washed then or later did not really matter.

But as the Church became the official religion of Rome and institutionalized, the leaders became powerful, rituals returned and insistence of form without content began to return. Baptism became the fashion of the period. The few who opposed were forced into it because that was the religion of the Empire. Baptism by total immersion became popular during this period. Historical records indicate that hundreds of citizens were marched into rivers and baptized in Rome. About AD 300 the whole kingdom of Armenia became Christian under King Tiridates III. In AD 486 King Clovis of the Franks was baptized along with three thousand of his soldiers. A hundred years later St. Augustine and his monks baptized King Ethelbert of Kent together with thousand of Saxons. In AD 955 five thousand Magyars of Hungary were baptized and the country became Christian, under King Stephen. Then came Poland became Christian under Prince Mieczyslaw and Russia under Emperor Vladimir. In the eleventh century King Olave of Norway was baptized and that country became Christian. That is how Christianity became the major religion of Europe. In Africa and India, the process was similar. Acta Thoma presents the story of St.Thomas in the courts of Kings and Perumals and was essentially directed to the families the Brahmin

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teachers called Namboothiris. First Malabar church consisted of seven and half units of Church with ten families per unit along with the migrant Jewish families of Cochin. The first Bishop was Prince Peter of the Jewish settlement. After the initial baptism Thomas left for North India and returned to complete his disciplining.

Baptizing the infants as part of the household prevailed from the early church period. This was the Jewish tradition. Talmud specifically mentions the justification of child conversion baptism as beneficiary to the covenant. Baptism was never considered as anything other than an initiation into discipleship as the Great Commission suggested. The major impetus of infant baptism grew out of a response to a fifth century theological controversy. Against a growing heresy that Adam's sin had no consequence on the rest of humankind, St. Augustine emphasized the transmission of original sin through inheritance. Infant baptism was emphasized as a means of washing away the original sin inherited from Adam. It was the impact of Augustine's theology that initiated the view of baptism as the sacrament for the forgiveness of original sin rather than incorporation into the Body of Christ. Certainly a better theological justification for infant baptism was articulated by St. John Chrysostom in the fourth century: "...in baptism they (infants) are given justice and inheritance of the grace to be members of Christ and dwellings of the Holy Spirit."

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He argued that although infants were not capable of a personal faith, the faith of the Church supplied it for them. Theology continued to strongly emphasize that the sacrament removed the stain of original sin. By the fifteenth century baptism was defined as the sacrament "through which an infant is rescued from the devil's power and adopted as God's child." The theology thus complicated the simple act of infant baptism into a magic and mystery.

Reformation and Revival

The period from 426 A.D. to 1628 A.D. is called the "Dark Ages."

With the establishment of the Roman Catholic Church a bloody persecution began. All those who dissented even slightly from the official Magestirium were hunted and hounded to the utmost limit and annihilated. Very often honest preachers were given a bad name and stoned. An estimated fifty million Christians were killed as heretics.

The Inquisition was instituted by Pope Innocent III and was perfected under Pope Gregory IX. Inquisition was a "Church Court" established by the popes for the trying and punishing of "heretics" ... a heretic being anyone who did not agree with Roman Catholicism. The conditions within the Catholic Church had become so corrupt that many voices were raised within the church in protest. Among these voices were that of John Wycliffe (1320- 1384), John Huss (1373-1415), Savonarola (1452-1498), Zwingli (1484-1531), John Knox (1505-1572), John Calvin (1509-1564), Martin Luther, (1483 to 1546) and George Fox, (1624 to 1691) . The

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combined effort of these men, along with many others, brought about the Reformation. A small group of earnest young believers said that reformations of Luther and Zwingli had not gone far enough. Conrad Grebel led this group in an attempt to emulate New Testament Christianity. They baptized one another and verbalized their faith in Jesus Christ at Zurich, Switzerland, in January 1525. This unleashed the Protestant Inquisition, which used the same techniques and subtle tortures against those who disagreed with them. But the group nicknamed Anabaptists – the rebaptisers, because they baptized those who were baptized earlier as infants - remained in spite of the persecution – as a small group. Initially, the Anabaptists used sprinkling and pouring as their mode of baptism, but insisted on adult believer's baptism on public confession of faith. Given the feudal nature of the society the movement did not spread fast. Their number increased only by salvaging the children. It is not sure when the practice of total immersion in backward position was instituted. This must have been a later development.

Most of the Anabaptists successors became the Mennonites, Amish and Quakers.

The line of churches, which called themselves Baptist, began in 1610 in Holland. It began with a man named John Smyth who was a bishop in the Church of England. In 1606, after nine months of soul searching and study of the New Testament he was convinced that the doctrines and practices of the Church of England were not Biblical, and thus he

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resigned his position as priest and left the church. John Smyth had to flee England. In Amsterdam, he along with Thomas Helwys and thirty-six others formed the first Baptist church of Englishmen. They stood for baptism of believers only and considered infant baptism as outright devilish. . He believed apostolic succession had been lost and the only way to recover was to start again. So he baptized himself and then the others of his congregation. As time passed Smyth began changing his position on details of form of worship and procedures. First, Smyth insisted that true worship was from the heart and that any form of reading from a book in worship was an invention of sinful man. Prayer, singing and preaching had to be completely spontaneous. He went so far with this mentality that he would not even allow the reading of the Bible during worship. Smyth died in 1612. A few of his followers Helwy, Thomas and Murton returned to England and started the First Baptist Church. Those who remained in Holland joined the Mennonites. The Baptist churches formed in England were of Arminian in theology. Opposing this theology another church called Particular Baptist Church came into existence around 1616 with Calvinistic persuasion.

About this time the Puritans were also becoming strong in England. The discovery of America opened up new possibilities of freedom for those who were dissenters and who were persecuted. This was the beginning of a new era of individualism. . Puritans and Baptists alike, in order to escape persecution, migrated to the New World.

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The Puritan Congregational Churches persecuted the Baptists in America until the U.S. Constitution, which provided freedom of religion, was passed in 1787.

America and Individualistic Sects.

The new freedom found in the America and Australia became the breeding grounds for new experiences, experiments. Gnostic religions and other Eastern influences greatly encouraged these experiments. The emphasis was that Christian experience is strictly personal and there has to be new second birth experience and a new second and probably a third blessing. The Corinthian phenomena were considered the ideal. From these individualistic theology came the next wave of Pentecostalism and charismatic groups.

The modern Pentecostal movement had its origins in Topeka, Kansas, in a small Bible school conducted by Charles Fox Parham, a holiness evangelist who began his ministry as a Methodist pastor. In 1901, Agnes Ozman, a student at Parham's school, received the baptism in the Holy Spirit accompanied by speaking in tongues. This experience soon appeared all over the world in unconnected places almost the same time. The Pentecostal movement received worldwide influence in 1906 in Los Angeles, California, in the **Azusa Street revival** led by the **African-American holiness evangelist William Joseph Seymour**. From Azusa Street, the Pentecostal experience spread around the world. The emphasis

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of the Pentecostalism was not water baptism, but baptism with the Holy Spirit, which was, considered another event. By now the immersion baptism symbolizing death and burial of the person became standard for all new churches. This is indeed the correct understanding of faith in modern terms. Cross no longer reminds anyone of suffering or death. How can it represent death when the cross on the necks of bishops and kings represented power and authority? Surrendering oneself into the hands of others to be drowned is the correct image of dying to self in this society.

However the Pentecostal movement soon gave rise to divisiveness, fraud and was influenced by Gnostic occult mysticism. This is inevitable in an individualistic self-centered society. The movement itself was centered on persons. Parham himself was involved in racism, authoritarianism, and sexual scandal. Classical Pentecostal Movement continued to proliferate at an amazing rate. Large number of independent and indigenous churches began to rise all over the world with varying doctrinal stand. Then came the penetration of Pentecostalism into the mainline Protestant and Catholic churches as "charismatic renewal" movements with the aim of renewing and reviving the historic churches. These movements were powerful enough that the main line churches could not neglect them. They were therefore internalized.

"Neo-Pentecostal" movement followed close on line in 1960 in Van Nuys, California under the ministry of Dennis Bennett, Rector of St. Marks Episcopal (Anglican) Church. The influence of movement caught

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up even the traditional churches. Many Protestant and Orthodox Churches around the world, including the Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement had its beginnings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1967 among students and faculty of Duquesne University. "Third Wave" of the Spirit which originated at Fuller Theological Seminary in 1981 under the classroom ministry of John Wimber. These consisted of mainline Evangelicals who moved in signs and wonders.

Essentially, these movements gave a new revival to Christianity because of the visual impact it gave. The intensification rite of the church, which until now has been restricted to the reading and exposition of the Word of God and to the breaking of the bread was not considered sufficient. New and astounding modes of intensification's and daily signs and wonders and miracles were expected to be normal. Strange experiences were always fascinating and a large crowd followed such Simon Magnus performance. Speaking in tongues became old fashioned and Holy Laughter became the new style. The believer was expected to be slain in the spirit and returned with vigor at least once a week. The effectiveness of the new forms of experiences was in their performance factor. As a revivalist techniques these were effective. But one cannot give shock treatment every day to a patient and expect them to live a normal life. This is what is actually happening in many groups as pointed out by Hank Hanegraft "Christianity in Crisis:

The question therefore is what is relevant to the current society where we live in? Old norms of tribes, communities, families etc are no longer

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valid. Families are broken and are scattered all over the world. No one takes responsibility for other even within the family. Legally this is not possible. You cannot discipline your own child. Therefore we have become individualistic. Adult baptism is therefore a relevant alternative or the only alternative within the capitalistic society. Majorities of the people of our western world are no longer Christian in any sense. If they have been baptized as babies, they have never been taught. As children, they have not been to Sunday school. They never had any Bible teaching and prayer at home. They have had no experience of Worship. To be a Christian is understood only in negative terms - giving up of good things, living up to impossible standards, assenting to incomprehensible ideas, and partaking in rituals. It is not surprising that the Pentecostalism started with its emphasis on personal salvation apart from community, in America. This is not believer's baptism

It is simply that this generation have the chance of hearing the gospel and have a chance to make a choice to learn about Jesus only as an adult. If early church was any guide, we should baptize these seekers immediately and make them disciples.

People Movement and Missionary dilemma.

The experience of missions in the third world countries where there is communal coherence and strong family ties belied the missionaries. The mission compound strategy of the missionaries was to encamp in an alien society and live as alien Christians failed miserably. The individualistic

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salvation brought in only the rejects and rebellious of the society into Christianity. Thus Christianity remained a foreign religion with little relevance to them. Those of us who have lived and worked in other cultures and who have tried evangelism have soon to discover the wisdom of the Great commission calling for disciplining through baptism and teaching. Thus came the mass movement or peoples movement.

In 1933 Bishop J. W. Pickett of the Methodist Church published his *Christian Mass Movements in India* Bishop Pickett pin pointed that virtually large growth of the churches in India had been through mass conversions. A mass movement at that time was defined as a movement which eventually resulted in the turning of a large proportion of the members of a certain caste to become Christians. Later the term "mass movement" was changed to "group movement" and "people movement". Extensive studies in these directions are being done. It began in 1955 when India missionary Donald McGavran published *The bridges of God*. Later, McGavran established the chair of church growth at the School of World Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, Cal. In 1981, Peter Wagner replaced McGavran at Fuller Seminary. Strangely enough it was the Mennonites who triggerred this change in understanding. The word "people" is defined, not in racial or national terms, but by identifying them as communities who do not usually marry outside their own grouping. This makes it possible to use one term for a typical early European or modern African tribe, or a caste scattered among many other people over a large part of India, or a clan, or clannish group of people, within a nation or city. If there had been a church

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growth through missionary efforts in Africa and Asia, this was through people's movement, which contradicts basically with believer's baptism and personal conversion. Even when personal conversion is assumed these were never based on perennial conviction. Masai's of Kenya and Nagas of India are typical of these. It was the disciplining and teaching that followed baptism that made the difference and not the personal motives of the people themselves. To engage in individual examination on all members and then selecting the ones that pass the test (what ever that test may be) will be fragmenting and nullifying any missiological thrust. The social solidarity cohesiveness will work against the teaching process. People groups and cultures evolve over time in terms of values, customs and influences. That is the way Christian faith should establish in human culture.

What is relevant in America is not relevant in other cultures. Even in America it differs from place to place. The form of baptism is not relevant at all. That is not an eternal principle. What is temporal undergoes changes, what is permanent is what we need to concentrate upon.

SOME INTERESTING DOCUMENTS

- Catholic Doctrines on Baptism (Catholic Encyclopaedia)
- John Calvin's Defence of Infant Baptism
- Martin's Luther's Defence of Infant Baptism
- Luther's Catechism
- Luther's Sermon on Infant Baptism
- Infant Baptism in Early Church History by Dennis Kastens
Issues, Etc. Journal - Spring 1997 - Vol. 2 No. 2
- Baltimore Catechism on Baptism
- Baptism - Article in the 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia.
- Baptism - Mennonite Confession of Faith; Article 11.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church- Council of Trent: Canons on Baptism

- The Mystery of Baptism - Chapter 9 of the electronic edition of the New Edition (1985) of Andrew M. Greeley's *The Great Mysteries: An Essential Catechism*.
- Pictures of a Baptism by Immersion - Two photos of a baptism at an Easter Vigil service at Holy Name of Mary Parish in Croton on Hudson, NY
- St. Augustine: On Baptism
- St. Thomas Aquinas: The Summa Theologica on Baptism
- Tertullian: On Baptism
- About The UMC - Our Beliefs - Baptism - Official Website of The United Methodist Church
- Baptism - An in-depth study by Mark A. Copeland advocating the Salvific function of Baptism.
- The LDS Doctrine of Baptism
- Baptism of the Dead given by LDS
- Infant Baptism LBC
- The Blurring of Infant and Adult Baptism - Bill Easum
- Unconditional Election and Infant Salvation by Loraine Boettner, Eleventh Printing, The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia, PA 1963 (Excerpt)
- Christian Baptism by John Winebrenner
- Infant Baptism Modern Reformed Church

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- Infant Baptism - Scriptural, Reasonable- by Samuel Miller
- Teach Yourself About Baptism - A Scriptural Guide - Rev. Kelvin Franklin
- Mikvah: A Study on Jewish Baptisms -Peggy Priyor-
<http://www.hebroots.com/mikvah.html>
- Sprinkling is Scriptural- A Reply to the Baptist Adamthwaite's "*Baptism is Immersion!*" Rev. Prof. Dr. Francis Nigel Lee
- The Biblical Mode of Baptism- Rev. Robert C. Harbach
- Robin M. Jensen, Associate Professor, Andover Newton Theological School *The Emergence of the Orthodox Jesus in Early Christian Art*. Examine certain key examples of early Christian painting, mosaic, and sculpture (ca. 300-600 CE) for evidence of the development of Christian doctrine,
- Does Archaeology Prove that Baptism May Be Administered by Sprinkling? by Wayne Jackson Christian Courier: Feature
- Is Sprinkling an Appropriate Mode of Baptism?
by Caleb Colley <http://www.apologeticspress.org/articles/2237>